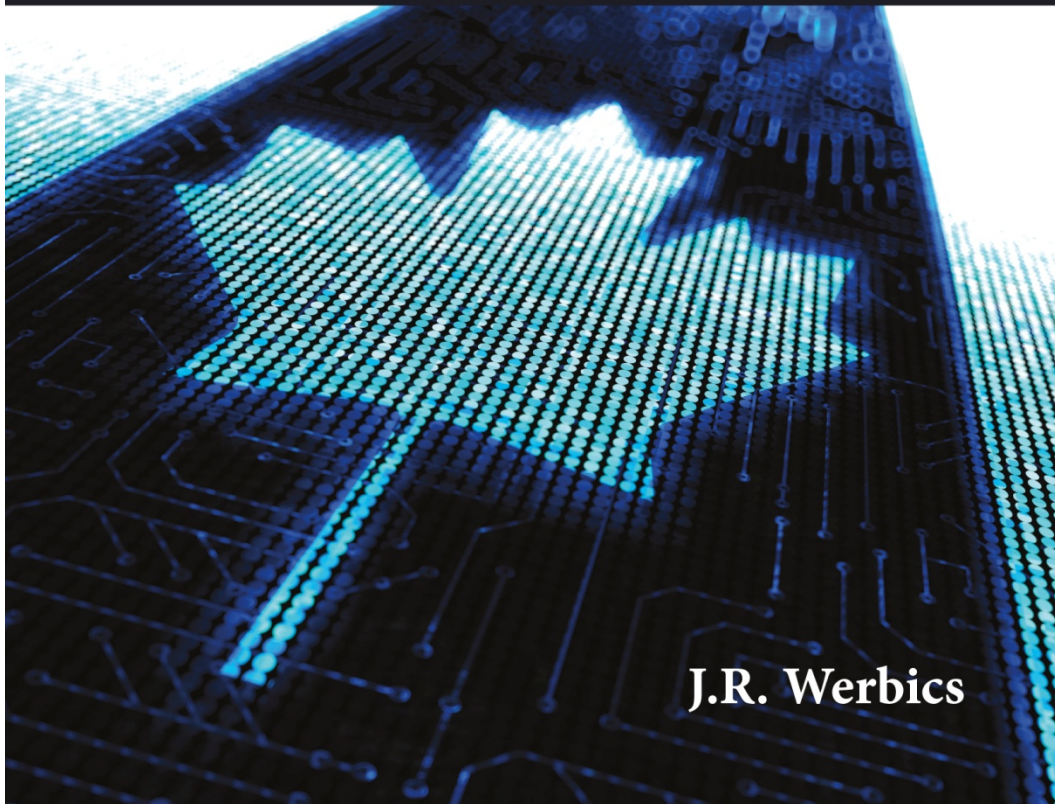


Politics VOLUME I

THE THOUGHTS OF A PEASANT PHILOSOPHER

Anniversary Edition



J.R. Werbics

**The Thoughts of a Peasant Philosopher
Volume I: Politics
Anniversary Edition**

written by

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The Thoughts of a Peasant Philosopher, Volume I: Politics (anniversary edition)

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*A special thank you to my aunt **Eleanor Lowry** for her love and support,
for without it, this project would not have been completed.*

Dedication

As a man of Eastern European ancestry, the recent events that have taken place in Ukraine have a special meaning and importance for me.

This work is dedicated to the 110 individuals who gave their lives and the thousands of others who stood strong in Independence Square (the Maidan) in Kiev, Ukraine during the winter of 2013-2014. They fought and defeated the forces of tyranny and oppression, their only weapons a digital smart phone, a shield molded by a belief in democracy, and a sword cast in the name of freedom.

Let their sacrifice, courage and spirit be an inspiration for all those who work to make democracy more direct and effective, and to others who attempt to expand the definition and meaning of freedom in the postmodern world of the 21st century.

*I also have to thank the following people for their help and insight,
for it was their timely guidance that brought forth within me the understanding
to see what I could not see by myself alone.*

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Master Corporal Yorkton

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*all my friends in the UFCW who walked the picket line with me
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PREFACE

by Aaron Taylor

Marshall McLuhan was right—we live in a global village.

But while he gave a lot of thought to how we communicate, he could never have imagined the kind of impact this idea would have on how we govern ourselves.

As nature tends to evolve into bigger and more complex systems, so too do business and government tend towards consolidation. Bigger institutions create a need for more complex bureaucracies to manage them, bureaucracies that are faceless, nameless and utterly indifferent to the human condition, a nightmare straight out of the pages of Kafka.

Long gone are the days when we think in terms of “us” and “them.” While we stubbornly insist on defining ourselves as people by increasingly regionalized folk cultures, corporations are thinking in terms of global market share, and government of the people, by the people, for the people *loses* market share while becoming ever more protective and interested in shrinking spheres of influence. The intricacy of individual human interaction has given way to pandering to the lowest common denominator. The individual has given way to “mass man.”

The Internet, however, is starting to change that.

Communication from one part of an empire no longer takes weeks or months to arrive—it travels at the speed of light. We no longer have any excuse about not being aware of global affairs in the most obscure corners of the world—the spark of individualism flickers as we choose to acknowledge the world on our own terms and in our own time.

The irony is while it might be a global village, we still stick to our own neighbourhoods. It is also getting harder and harder to tell one neighbourhood from another as everyone—East and West—bows before the twin ideals of representational democracy and the market economy. Really, what does it matter if you live in the exotic East or the homogenous West, if you pray to Jesus in the heartland of the North American Bible Belt or if you bow to Mecca in the oil-rich sands of the Middle East, when you can still get the exact same ice cold Coca-Cola?

Previously, explorers set out to discover new worlds and along the way encountered strange and alien cultures. The trade routes were tenuous and treacherous. Lines of communication were virtually non-existent. On maps, drawings of the known world were bordered with the ominous phrase: “Here, there be dragons...”

If nothing else, the Internet has taught us that everything leads to everything else. There is a feeling of sameness about the world now that’s different from the original age of empire.

This aura of sameness has also led to an increasing sense of alienation and disassociation—from ourselves, from each other; helplessness and powerlessness in the face of big business that panders to the lowest common denominator, and detachment from governments that grow ever less responsive to the needs and wishes of the people. The only thing worse than knowing you're not alone is knowing you don't matter.

Government, as the Peasant Philosopher defines it, is at least partially the art of managing information. The Internet is, if nothing else, the democratization of information. It is quickly surpassing television and even radio as the breaking source of news.

It has also been used as a tool of democratic action. The now infamous Battle of Seattle, in which a meeting of signatories of the World Trade Organization was disrupted by an eclectic group of activists with no common ground beyond a desire to disrupt the meeting, was organized through the Internet. The student uprising in China that led to the Tiananmen Square massacre was spurred on by the Internet after authorities cut off other lines of communication.

But the world is no stranger to revolution and rebellion. What is becoming foreign is responsive government, private enterprise with a conscience and people who are interested in taking charge of their own future. The only options are to continue down the current path and willfully abrogate responsibility for our lives and our future to the nameless faces walking the corridors of power, or to become actively involved in determining the political and economic history of the world, the birthright of every human being.

Slavery or freedom, the choice is ours.

Democracy, free enterprise and the Internet are a natural fit: all three rely on a single, fundamental principle—the freedom of choice.

While combining the Internet and democracy is not a novel idea, the Peasant Philosopher provides a philosophical basis for once more putting the ultimate power of democracy—the power to make laws—back in the hands of the people.

Primary democracy is, at its heart, a philosophy of freedom.

ANNIVERSARY EDITION INTRODUCTION

Since that preface was written some 15 years ago by my good friend Aaron Taylor, the truth that it speaks has only become more self-evident. People of the Western world need a functioning, sustainable and incorruptible democratic system in which the dreams and aspiration of *all* are respected and achievable.

When I began writing *Politics* in 1997, I did so at a great disadvantage. I found myself in a small city in Saskatchewan that had a library which offered nothing in the way of resources that could be used in the production of this work. To complicate matters further, despite the fact that I had spent years toiling away in the stacks of the University of Winnipeg library researching my ideas, all the notes I had acquired over those years, were now lost to me, either by providential design or simple misfortune.

Thus, I was given two choices: work from memory and present my ideas as best as I could or not publish at all. I would like to thank Winnipeg video artist Grant Guy and numerous professors from both the University of Winnipeg and Manitoba who, during the early 1990s, gave me the courage to put pen to paper. I would especially like to acknowledge the friendship of Prof. Jim Turner (Professor of English, University of Manitoba), and Prof. George Lammers (Professor of Geology, University of Manitoba) for their tireless efforts in shaping my intellectual studies, and their dedication in overseeing that I had an academic path to follow as I chased down my philosophical ideas.

You see, these men of learning knew I would be at a great disadvantage if I attended a university in Canada—my ideas being the antithesis of much that was taught at the university level at that time. To further complicate matters, my family did not have the money to send me abroad for schooling. Luckily, through their generosity, guidance and tutelage, I was able to sidestep the need for a formal university education and navigate my own learning platform designed by these men who were my friends.

It was because of their belief in me and my ideas that I was confident enough to write Volume I in 1997.

To complicate matters even further, in the process of writing Volume I, I found myself moving once again—this time to a new town and an ever more time-consuming job. But for once my luck changed for the better and it was there I befriended Aaron Taylor, who would become this work's editor and silent conscience. It was with his input and refined editorial ability to see the work's hidden meaning that we were together able to bring out the true nature and profound implications of the ideas that had consumed me for so long.

Over a great number of long evenings in 1998 and 1999, Aaron and I spoke at length about how to bring forth the ideas in *Politics*. It was a real stroke of luck that Aaron and I shared the same perspective in life: the status quo was not working and the dreams we'd both grown up with were not readily achievable in Canada. From this shared

understanding, we understood implicitly that Canada was not as democratic, free and open a society as we had been taught to believe.

Thus, *Politics* was not just a book that was mine alone, it was a shared accomplishment. In fact, the idea of describing primary democracy as a form of sustainable government belongs solely to Aaron.

Yet despite Aaron's fine ability, I knew when the work was released on the Internet in late 1999 it had within it many flaws, and the ideas presented within were, in many respects, incomplete. I had hoped to revisit the work and refine the ideas therein, but never had the time. Months eventually turned into years and I found myself working on other defining aspects of *The Thoughts of a Peasant Philosopher*, which found their way into volumes II and III. In all honesty, as the years passed, I found that the distance between *Politics* and me had grown so immense, I could not see myself revisiting the work...but then came 2008 and the Great Economic Collapse.

Suddenly I found myself writing and thinking about political philosophy once again. And now, at this stage of my life, I am glad I chose the option of bringing forth the idea of primary democracy in its initial and original rough overtones over never having even attempted it.

In this anniversary edition, I have tried my very best to preserve as much of the original work as possible. However, like anything that has existed over a period of time, much can be learned and improved upon. From what was published online in 1999, the entire book has been drastically revised and reworked. In particular, Part I has undergone the greatest revision.

In the course of producing this anniversary edition, it became necessary to approach the ideas and concepts originally presented in Part I in a different and more dynamic way: the great generalizations that permeated the original *Politics* have been distilled down to specific examples, the Western world is no longer spoken about as one homogenous region, and the demarcation line between society and the individual is more clearly defined.

Part I has also been renamed "Political and Economic Consolidation in the West During the Twilight of the Modern Era"; three original essays, "The Power and Ideas Behind Politics and Economics," "How the Definition of Democracy Changed" and "The Free Market System and Representational Democracy" have been completely rewritten, expanded and renamed. Part I also includes a new essay entitled "Caught in a Vice: Between the Fixed Jaw of Capitalism and the Sliding Jaw of Parliamentary Democracy" that attempts to clarify in a more nuanced way what the individual of the 1990s was experiencing.

This anniversary edition also contains two entirely new sections: "The Democratic Renaissance" and "A New Era of Enlightenment." I have placed these two new sections between the original sections of Part I and Part II to act as a bridge between all that is

past and what is still possible in our future. These two new sections contain essays written as a direct result of the cataclysmic events and consequences of the Great Economic Collapse of 2008.

The section dealing with the core idea of primary democracy has also been completely reworked. The greatest change in this section is that the concept of primary democracy is now written from a postmodern philosophical position rather than a modern extension of democracy, as first envisioned. As was the case with Part I, many of the original essays have been drastically refined and altered to allow for a greater understanding of primary democracy—from concepts of power and rights to issues of freedom, equality and justice, this anniversary edition attempts to illustrate its role more clearly.

Where possible, I have included footnotes, updated facts, recent quotes, and additional historical references that can only enhance the accuracy and understanding of the ideas presented herein. I have also taken into account the fact that the Internet and digital publishing have taken over the world. This work will allow those who use the digital copy as their preferred choice to easily find those references and facts at the tip of their fingers; cut and paste the links into your browser or drop and paste the link into Google.

I encourage my readers to follow these links: they are provided to offer the reader even greater depth and understanding. The body of this work and the added information from the beaten path of history allows the reader to juxtapose our world in a different way than is normally presented in textbooks, giving new insight to how we have moved through recent history as individuals.

Despite these changes and additions, the work's *raison d'être* remains.

Politics is a work devoted to and written for the hard-working men and women who do not define themselves as the academic, political and economic elite of today's Western society; and for those individuals who believe in politics free of ideology and a society that embraces freedom in all its forms: democracy, the supremacy of the individual, the unhindered right to exercise your religious conscience without persecution and a future where economic prosperity is available for *everyone*.

And for me, this anniversary edition of *Politics* is a second chance at writing the book I wanted to present to the world back in 1997.

SECTION I: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSOLIDATION IN THE WEST DURING THE TWILIGHT OF THE MODERN ERA

Introduction

Austerity. A dirty word that belies any truth to which it speaks. Those who are responsible for such extreme economic events suffer only the feigned indignity of inconvenience while the common man and woman, who had nary a hand on any lever of power, are struck down into the gutter of economic impoverishment; the fairer sex paying the higher price of abject poverty, the children—the most vulnerable segment of society who can least afford any of it—suffering the worst of this injustice.

Austerity in Canada continues. No organization or political force in existence can stop the federal Liberal government in power from continuing down this path.

Unions stopped marching long ago in protest over the cuts; it would seem their leaders are resigned to the fact they have limited influence and are now more concerned with preserving their own self-interests. If union members are lost, so be it—as long as the union and its leadership survives to maintain a seat at the table of Canada's elite. Businesses continue to roll back wages and hours, pension benefits have been cut, and many businesses have even eliminated pensions entirely, the future placed squarely on the back of workers who have not got the extra income to save. Hospitals are closing without regard for the sick; waiting lists for treatment have grown from days to months.

As for the older generations in Canada, it appears that the fight has gone out of many: those in the working classes neither protest or organize to fight the cuts, the old too busy enjoying their subsidized retirement. And my generation's future is saddled with academic loans of outrageous proportions; our dreams of family put on hold and in some cases dashed completely in favour of endless Saturday nights playing video games in our parents' basements. But what has happened here in Canada will not go down in history without some benefit. Should this situation arise again elsewhere in the world and common men and women are forced to put their lives on hold, these lessons of inaction and docile acceptance of the status quo here in Canada will form the knowledge, the inspiration, the foundation and the wake-up call for those who have the power to stop such outrageous misfortune...

Only the youth of tomorrow can save us all.

Their eyes will see the injustice, their minds will be fueled by the optimism, passion and conviction to do what is right. This will give them the courage to spring into action. Only the young not yet corrupted and compromised by the system themselves—those with least to lose but the most to gain—will be able to risk the consequences of these actions to mold the future into one that belongs to them and not the elite who enforce such unjust things as austerity.

With this knowledge, the youth can add their voices to that universal philosophical

question of emancipation: “Will the individual always have to struggle to free himself from persecution, oppression and tyranny?” And the youth will be correct to call out those who administer such injustice and then lead the search for an answer to this question, for it is their destiny to pay a heavy price for the mistakes of those who come before them.

Today, the question of emancipation of the individual rings loud in the ears of many. No matter the age or era, this struggle has always existed. This political truth has been lost on many, regardless of age or gender. This question is rarely raised at university anymore; it is never spoken of between friends at work or discussed at the dinner table. Those who lead in the arenas of politics and business speak only of policy and planning, never about such things as expanding democracy; enhancing freedom or empowering the poor in the name of individual emancipation.

We know deep in our hearts and minds that freedom is not free, democracy decays without participation, and prosperity is not guaranteed for everyone who walks the earth. It all comes with a high price and a struggle never-ending; to put forth a solution to this problem or supply an answer to our question is no easy task. Obstacles abound in every direction; false promises litter the path to any solution; fear and apprehension stalk those who are faint of heart. And for those still willing to forge ahead, you can be sure that violence, thuggery and perhaps the threat of prison will be thrown down as a gauntlet before you.

Just as there are those who are willing to stand up against injustice and tyranny, there are many who are willing to fight for the privilege, wealth and the influence that comes with the defence of distorted and twisted power. This selfishness, greed and lust for things that rightfully belong to others—a culture of pleonexia forever standing between the individual’s need to be free and those who wish to control the world for their own selfish reasons or the childish desire to implement utopian ideological goals—has nothing to do with the greater good of humanity.

Worse, in the search for an answer to our unjust plight, the individual has an uncanny ability to ignore the misery of life in favour of a lie that is much easier to live with. We do this to get through the day, when we know that to acknowledge our misery would make life unbearable. In creating a place for ourselves within our own minds, we can escape the reality of the world that will only lead to depression and the loss of our own free will¹ to live and survive.

Yet, when we turn to our neighbourhoods and communities to search out the answer, we find that the world we try so hard to ignore is itself built upon illusion and masquerade. We perform the routines of our daily lives without truly knowing what or who causes our plight. Although the media claims only to reflect and mirror the Gestalt of any given day, it nonetheless directs and influences its citizens according to national and cultural direction founded upon special interests or ideology. The only clue you can follow in this

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_will

false narrative that might set your feet on the path to an answer is that this view of national existence does not necessarily hold true from one state to another.

Here in the West, people's existence is similar in both the structure of governments and economies. Within these states, known as representative democracies, the lives of citizens are remarkably alike. Most, if not all of these particular states are of similar design, with the exceptions of the United States of America² and Switzerland, with its governing principles of direct democracy. All of the other Western governments founded upon the idea of parliamentary democracy have been in existence for as long as 120 years, or are a product of recent history;³ and each has been built upon a mystery no one can truly decipher.

And the mystery is: Who holds power?

Answering this question is the first brick of the path that must be laid if you want to discover not only an answer to the question of individual emancipation but also build an environment where that answer can be successfully acted upon. In the past, it was always easy to figure out who our oppressors were. For us in the West, two such organizations were the aristocracy and the Church.⁴ But who holds power today?

We are told by the academics, the elite, the media, the establishment politician, the economist and our parents that it is the individual who has the democratic right to vote and is the ruler, not the slave, and that the answer to our question lies elsewhere. But should we not unravel the mystery completely before we dismiss this perceived innocuous and benign truth espoused by others?

Even though the right to vote seems like a choice or an individual act of self-determination, when viewed in terms of the consequence it represents this right seems hollow and without meaning. For instance, we find ourselves bound to laws, regulations and rules that were never agreed to or discussed publicly. Nor are our lives our own in a time when the individual is forced to compete on a global economic scale, forced into menial, undignified and part-time work as full-time employment disappears—the alternative being that we starve and let our families perish; in a time when an adequate system of support does not exist for those who fail in their attempt to better themselves.

Already, this simple and innocent inquiry would seem to suggest that the individual of the Western world is caught in a vice. With parliamentary democracy on one side and an emerging global economy on the other, each exerts untold pressure on those caught in the middle. And who is caught in the middle? The same people who have been at the mercy of the wealthy, well-connected privileged elite since Western civilization began—the poor, working poor and middle classes.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_republic

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_reunification

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire

Politically and economically, in this age of austerity in Canada, life has become increasingly unbearable for the people in these classes. Life is no longer simple existence, but a struggle to make ends meet. From the latch-key kid forced to fend for himself in the inner city, to the over-stressed and over-worked suburban couple with a dual income, life is no longer to be savoured but endured.

Yet again, the elite cry out with a message reinforced by the mass media that liberty means all citizens are masters of their own economic destiny. Isn't the concept of a free market built on the idea of choice and the right of the individual to have power over that choice? How can something that adheres to the idea of free contract and advocates for free trade among individuals, businesses and nations be oppressive or in any way subjugating? This message is further ingrained in the minds of all by our educational system; the story repeated by our professors, teachers, guides and school counselors.

Yet the fact remains that those who put the most into such an economy get the least in return. Today, corporations have standing in the courts equal to the individual. The right to choose from ten brands of toothpaste is useless if there is no clean water to rinse your mouth with.

And what good is a high-paying job if the majority of your wages only buys the necessities of life? Those who take risks in today's free market see far more than their fair share of rewards than those whose work makes their profits possible; the wages offered to the majority of people who work just to sustain themselves is not enough to live a comfortable life!

If democracy, which has been touted as the best possible form of government ever created, is not what it is held to be and the idea of economic liberty is damaging to the concept of human freedom, what is left? Is it possible there is no answer to our question? Are we incapable of creating a political and economic system that cannot exist without some form of subjugation of the majority of the people of this planet? Or have such great ideas as democracy and capitalism been hijacked and corrupted by those who profit most by their alteration of definition and meaning?

If so, how did all this come to pass?

It would seem the answer to our question exists in places we are told not to look. But as you can see, the answer does not present itself easily here in the present, for the present is far too saturated by the propaganda of those who control Western nations, those who are embroiled in the European Union, or who rule in Canada.

In the search for the answer to today's questions, it is necessary to look to the past to see how the fabric and meaning of life has been manufactured and by whom. Only through an examination of the past is it possible to discover that the ideas of democracy and capitalism still ring true with the possibility of freedom and prosperity for the individual. It is in the past that we can see how philosophers and thinkers really envisioned democracy; the possibilities that freedom presents; the right to be an individual without

artificial interference; the power to understand the truth of your life instead of the lies perpetrated on so many in the Western world.

By examining the past, you will find that the definition of democracy has been altered and the definition of capitalism distorted from its original foundations. Only through such a shift in the definition of democracy was it possible to accommodate those who wished to rule for their own sake. Capitalism, although its definition has not been altered, has grown beyond its simple design; mechanisms of control and regulation once adequate are no longer capable of reining in a free market system that stretches beyond borders into a global system of international investment law and finance—a direction its original architects never thought possible, a system now capable of influencing the lives of individuals, an economic system now with overt political power that exists without any democratic accountability or recourse for those under its thumb.

It is upon this basis, then, that the first section of this work explores five specific points that go far beyond the issues of democracy and economic liberty related to our question of emancipation. These points must be addressed before any worthwhile answer can be presented. These points are specifically related to the pillars of wisdom⁵ and form this book's foundation—each is related to our original question; each offers the individual reader a unique chance to bring their own perspective, interpretation and understanding to this work.

To allow for a greater understanding into the complexities of why the narrative of emancipation no longer consumes the minds of today's leaders, intellectuals and political activists in much of the West, the first three pillars will focus on the perspective of those living in Canada, allowing for an in-depth examination and exploration of the many political and institutional barriers stifling the idea of individual emancipation.

To broaden this understanding, this work then expands the base of the fourth and fifth pillars to include a more general examination of the barriers that exist around the West itself, from detailing the current structure of the European Union and creating the new Euro zone to recent American attempts to address the inequalities of their political history, to examining the role globalization plays regarding the individual of the Western world. This structure is intended to show today's Western society in a broader light, to develop a foundation to which the individual can anchor himself and find an answer to our question of emancipation.

The first “pillar” supplies a current and relative definition of the nature of *power* by focusing on how power originates in Canada; it creates a restore point where all minds can converge for convenience, a clear starting point where all can agree upon and acknowledge the true nature of power in today's Western world. The second pillar involves *understanding* how the definition of democracy changed, forging its egalitarian principles from a top-down centralizing authority. By examining how parliamentary democracy and democratic structure works in Canada, it is easier to extrapolate why this

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Proverbs

little lie was specifically sold to Canadian citizens and, by extension, those nation states that today make up the European Union.⁶

Once this lie is sketched out for all to see, this work then explores how the construction of this lie permeates society, exerting pressure and influence on the individual, specifically looking at life in Canadian society through the eyes of the young, who are continually molded by the ideal of a “citizen of mass society.” By examining the prevailing social paradigm found in Canada through *discretion* and *knowledge*, a third pillar of our foundation emerges, allowing the reader to see how emancipation has slowly been eroded by an artificial intellectual concept of self.

This definition of self, manipulated over a period of decades, created a situation wherein Canadians find themselves separated not only by region and language, but also by social and politic status. Undermining the drive for greater political and economic freedoms, the desire for the emancipation of the individual has been replaced by a world in which each mass citizen lives separate from their communal spiritual base. The definition of rightful authority has been distorted for all men and women, replaced by the notion of collective rights, and a dilution of the individual’s potential and influence within society; in essence, the turning of thinking and feeling human beings into products for profit—the physical and intellectual destruction of the individual becoming a necessary, fundamental part of economic progress and political stability.

The last two essays in this section expand the foundation to our question regarding the emancipation of the individual to include a perspective that takes account of events that have occurred not just in Canada but also Europe and America. In particular, the fourth pillar of this foundation details the lack of *prudence* found in the consolidation of political and economic power that has taken place from the end of the Second World War to the new millennium in both Europe and the United States, a slow but unmistakable process whereby democratic power has been removed from the legislature and given to undemocratic judicial and economic bodies of authority both within and outside of the nation state.

The fifth and last pillar explored in this section details how unsound *wisdom* has allowed the idea of capitalism to grow beyond a simple economic model into a global free market system and a code of international investment law that today threatens to unravel the very core of human rights that protect the individual and provide the opportunity to live a life that is relatively their own.

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union

THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND CANADIAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC THOUGHT: POWER

Building a Solid Foundation on the First Pillar of Wisdom

It has been said that you must always speak truth to power.⁷ Although this statement was originally an American saying, it has an importance that crosses any border, and is especially true if you call Canada home. But before you can actively participate in this liberating exercise in Canada, you must first understand what power is. As a man who was under the age of 30 at the time of first writing this book in the late 1990s, I was well aware that what I had learned about power in Canada could truly only be miniscule in comparison to the research and writing put forth by many others.

Yet despite this handicap, I believe I formed an excellent understanding of what power is in this country, how it is wielded and by whom. This base of knowledge was forged from experience and confrontation; a path characterized mostly by my reaction to events rather than some perceptible insight, a path first created by the push of numerous, uncontrollable exterior forces upon my life from all things that could be equated with mainstream Canadiana⁸ to a final conscious and voluntarily embrace of this unusual path of discovery that travelled outside the mainstream Canadian narrative.

Due to this unique set of experiences, my knowledge and understanding of the concept of power differs in many ways from any collectively known or assumed interpretation of power in Canada. This foundation forms a very general definition, since power is not openly talked about in Canadian society; a general definition cannot be learned from a book, and an understanding is not readily communicated freely between individuals of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This Canadian concept of power escapes the minds of the immigrant and native-born Canadian alike, and, further, avoids concrete form or capture in a set of moving pictures, images or drawings.

Thus, the following path of experiences of power in a Canadian context can only be seen as mere footnotes to what others have been able to contribute to the definition, and how that definition relates to the worlds of politics and economics. Nonetheless, it does afford the reader the opportunity to learn something new about power in their world, provides a few addendums to the world of politics and economics and makes you wonder who really holds power in Canada today.

The following is a short chronicle of just such a journey, an incomplete story of power and its use and creation in Canada at the end of the millennium—a path that continues to write itself into the future...

⁷ <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=speak%20truth%20to%20power>

⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadiana>

Diversity, Pluralism and Multiculturalism: Three Words Invested with Limited Power

As you age, it is said that your memory fades; you twist facts and forget dates. But for some, age has the opposite effect: it enhances what you remember. The faces of your friends never fade; the past does not overlap itself with the knowledge of the present, tainting your memory with false impressions or knowledge you did not have in the past, events remain as they were, and their impact has the same developmental aspects as when they were first encountered. As you re-examine the pivotal points in your life—looking back through the years, seeing the many different paths that life threw you, going in one direction then another—their effects were enhanced a hundredfold by the passage of time, a thousand times more if your youth was traumatic or overtly difficult. In this context, if you are careful when recalling the past, you can condense your memory without actually distorting its contents, allowing you to present a story without all the commercials and fillers you might be accustomed to seeing if you grew up on television like I did.

Some have no recollection of the first day of Kindergarten, but I do. And it is this ability to recall my youth that also allows me to remember growing up in Canada during the 1970s, a time where we were taught that Canadians were a caring and peaceful people with neither grievance nor ill will toward the world or any of our fellow citizens. This particular message was told and taught not by my parents, but by those who had temporary custody of tomorrow's plumbers, electricians, nurses, flight attendants and Canada's future political and academic leaders: the public school employee, the teacher.

When you are young and growing up, it is easy to equate your surroundings with your general interpretation of *everything* in the world. For the individual, the diversity and pluralism found in one's small world can easily enhance and even add to the natural process of acquiring knowledge about the world one lives in. However, it is the context in which this diversity and pluralism appears that can lead to great misunderstandings, or in certain circumstances, even become intentionally misleading.

Objective knowledge, even at the ripe young age of a pre-schooler, requires a full understanding of the context upon which diversity and pluralism is supported; only then is one capable of seeing themselves in the "big picture" of life, and eventually their proper place in the community. The problems begin to arise if the context is artificially constructed or contrived, thus tainting not only one's continued subjective view of the world, but building an intellectual foundation that is purposefully misaligned with the *true* reality of one's own surroundings, forever obscuring the objective interpretation of how things *really* are in the community, and more generally, the wider world

At Prendergast Elementary in Kindergarten and Grade 1 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, we began our day singing the national anthem and praying the Lord's Prayer. Looking around, you could tell that everyone had enough to eat, we all came from nice homes with lots of room, and our parents each owned a car. Our school was clean and the students had all the school supplies we needed. The world outside our homes and school was a society and a community of tranquility, a place filled with tolerance, our teacher

would intone. Various words and phrases were used throughout the days and years, but the message never changed.

I was removed from Prendergast and started Grade 2 in a Catholic elementary school in rural Saskatchewan. Unlike the earlier years, I did not walk to school. Because we lived on my uncle's farm seven miles east of the town of Wilkie Saskatchewan, it was necessary to ride the bus to and from school. On that bus, I was surrounded by children of many different backgrounds, third generation Canadian children of Polish, German and Ukrainian descent. As for St. George Elementary, the tone and atmosphere was similar but not exactly that of Prendergast. Pictures of Jesus and the crucifix dotted the walls and hallways of the school, a place I learned very quickly was not only a place of learning, but also for the embracing of faith—a form of learning that was new to me. It seemed at the time to engender not only insight, but a uniquely unification with my fellow classmates.

Rural life was nothing like city life. You don't get to sleep in until 7:00 a.m. There is hard work to be done both before and after school: chores in the barns and corrals. And spring seeding and fall harvest took you away from school altogether. And that modest home settled on the property was often cramped, with little room for everyone. There was no moving to a bigger house or the possibility of building a new one in a suburb; you made do with what you had.

Back in Winnipeg and Prendergast for Grade 3, the Lord's Prayer had been replaced by the word *multiculturalism*. I did not give much thought to the change, but I paid attention to the meaning of the word, and had no problem believing the story of unity it told until the day our teacher hit Bavish so hard across the hand with a ruler that it broke.

Bavish had not started third grade with us, but dropped in about halfway through the school year. He was the only one in that suburban elementary class who looked different from the rest of us. None of my friends really knew where he came from. Someone thought it was Pakistan, another thought it was India. Even when we were told he was from Toronto, it was hard to grasp where that really was, nor did we know that the turban he wore on his head was called a *patka*.

But what *was* easy to grasp was our teacher's attitude toward Bavish; her continual lament about how she couldn't get through to him, how his English was too poor for her class, how difficult it was to understand him, how he was always distracted, how he never listened, and just did not seem able to fit in. And his punishments were always different than ours. If *we* acted up then we had to stand in the hall. If we really had a bad day, we saw the principal. But for Bavish, it always seemed worse.

And as good little Canadians, we didn't tell our parents; at least, I didn't. You kept that kind of stuff to yourself. And you certainly didn't tell the principal or another teacher; if you did, you got the feeling that there would be consequences. Nobody ever stepped outside of the artificial box being created for us; it was understood that silence was what

was expected of you, challenging authority just wasn't done when we had the privilege of living in the greatest country in the world.

And so we went about the business of trying to learn, slowly forgetting all about Bavish. And that was easy, as things suddenly sped up so fast that the years flew by, the months and days zipping by like hours. In Grade 4 at Prendergast, I began mandatory French classes, then suddenly found myself back in Saskatchewan for Grade 5—this time in North Battleford, an urban public school in a very small city. For the first time, I had First Nations classmates. And, just like with Bavish, the teacher seemed to treat them differently than the rest of the class.

The school in North Battleford was not a prosperous place, the reading handouts were old and worn out. The building was worn and old too, with no air conditioning and windows that stayed open in the spring. As with the time I spent in school in rural Saskatchewan, many were from the surrounding countryside and toted simple brown bag lunches.

But that experience did not stay with me long because in a few months I was back in Winnipeg at Prendergast, finishing Grade 5. That year, there was a school trip to the Hutterite Colony⁹ that I couldn't put out of my mind. Why did that young Hutterite kid throw his lunch at me when everyone was sitting in a large circle in the grass? Then there was the school trip that winter to the Festival De Voyageur¹⁰ in St. Boniface. But that really wasn't a school trip, since my grandparents lived in St. Boniface, and I had been going to the festival every year.

Then, suddenly, my time at Prendergast was over and it was time for middle school; new friends in a new area of Winnipeg. Here again everything seemed familiar but different. Everyone just had more of everything: more money; flashier clothes, bigger houses and two or more cars in the driveway. New friends were Greek, Chinese and of Italian descent, but Grade 7 turned out to be a big bust for learning—the regular teacher fell ill at the start of the school year and we ended up with multiple substitutes for the year. None could control the room, and we all got a pass regardless of our marks.

Within another year, I was off to J. H. Bruns High School, where everything changed again. The school offered so much more: new computers, a weight room, new books, lockers that looked new and clean. But it came with lots of distractions. Just as I was settling in, I moved twice within the city; more lost time and more classmates. I found myself in South Winnipeg going to yet another high school, and things were drastically different.

This high school resembled the long-held ideal of multiculturalism that hung over my thoughts of Winnipeg, where Folklorama¹¹ came to life for real, where “the rubber hit the road,” as they say. In this school, there were no new computers, no weight room, the

⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hutterite>

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festival_du_Voyageur

¹¹ <http://www.folklorama.ca/>

hallways were a lot dingier than J.H. Bruns and reminded me of the American sitcom *Welcome Back Kotter*.

Here I met a young black man trying to navigate the same system of learning I was. He lived with his grandmother in a small house. The TV in their small, cramped living room was broken, each channel engulfed in a blue tinge, and the reception crackling with static from time to time. And as we became friends, he told me about not being able to make it here and how he wanted to go live with his dad in Michigan where he coached at the university. Then, just as soon as I settled in, I was gone again, back to J. H. Bruns High School I'd left just a few months earlier.

So there I was, 17, in Grade 11, moving toward graduation, and I realized that with all the moving around over the past seven years, I had no interest in what the teachers wanted me to know. Sure, I could grind it out, and even make a run for the top mark in the class or become valedictorian the next year. But as I thought about how much work that would be, my head spun even faster, thoughts racing and crashing together like an atom-smashing nuclear reactor; I couldn't stop my head from spinning and felt burnt out. I hadn't even had the time to be a teenager—or a kid, for that matter. Nothing resembling stability existed in my life. It was 1987 and I had no idea where the time had gone.

So I quit school and got a job.

In very short order, things settled down enough for me to catch my breath. Driving pizzas around town into the wee hours of the night allowed endless hours of quiet thinking time behind the wheel, and I started to listen to my own thoughts for once, slowly coming to an understanding with myself about the world. All that time in school was not a complete waste; I did know a few things.

As I worked my way through this cathartic process, for some strange reason Bavish suddenly entered my mind after all these years—a nagging emptiness clouding his image. I realized I had no idea what had happened to him. Yet, there he stood in my mind just as he had in Grade 3—that look of being lost and out of place almost haunting.

So I tried to place him into what I knew: diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism were the things that had made my life interesting so far.

Regardless of whether or not you went to a public high school in the wealthy suburbs, the rural countryside of the Canadian Prairies, that inner city high school diversity and multiculturalism is there for everyone to experience. As for school, your days are filled with the mandatory classes of math, science and English. And after those two hours each school day, you could learn about cooking and sewing in Home Economics, the proper use of power tools in shop, how to type in business class, or you could indulge in a film study class. But as soon as you walked out that door and went home for the day, those three little words—diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism—ended.

In the wealthy suburbs, life was different, the days of education supplanted by evenings

filled with teenagers driving their new cars to the shopping mall to buy brand name clothes, the latest music and the hottest video games. Tutors, even though they were in high demand, were found: no price was too high to make sure honour roll grades were achieved. And the weekends were for kicking back, socials, two-day parties and relaxing; no part-time jobs needed here.

But, as hard as I tried, I couldn't see Bavish in this world of privilege anywhere.

Was his life like the one me and my friends knew? Did he get that summer internship in the law firm like my friend did last summer? Did he get that high-paying summer job at the big American conglomerate like my other friend did because his dad ran it? Did Bavish get the last spot in the student parliament because his mother knew the right people? Did he steal things for fun and kicks like some, when they could easily pay for it? Did he get to spend all summer at the cottage, fishing, dirt-biking and camping? Did he go to Europe on the school field trip last year? Or vacation in Banff over the Christmas holidays? Did he have his own stockbroker at 16, like I did? If he drove, did he know someone who can get his speeding tickets fixed for him?

In working all this out, I suddenly realized that in this entire process of growing up over all those years, with all those experiences created for me and artificially supplied by others, with all those things I was forced to learn and the few I managed to teach myself, diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism were lacking.

The first clue that entered my mind reminded me that this unexplained emptiness was prevalent in almost everyone—from the farm to South Winnipeg, to North Battleford and even that first year at Prendergast—the image consumed all, it was just more pronounced in the memory of Bavish and those native children in my class in Saskatchewan. And then, as my friends slowly flashed around in my mind, I suddenly realized that hollow image and emptiness also engulfed my black, inner city friend.

And when Bavish re-appeared again in my mind's eye, this time I looked beyond personal experience, the rhetoric, the facts, the statistics and finally even the educational propaganda surrounding the three words: diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism.

And this time I saw the emptiness for what it was: the face of the powerless.

Being a Valedictorian in the Shadow of the Me Generation

Leadership and power are inextricably intertwined.¹²

If it were not for my graduation from basic training with the Canadian Armed Forces when I was 18, I don't know when or if I would have realized this correlation; power and leadership were never discussed in the years I spent in the Canadian public school system.

¹² http://www.hks.harvard.edu/netgov/files/talks/docs/11_06_06_seminar_Nye_HP_SP_Leadership.pdf

Standing there on that parade ground in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia on that hot and muggy day in August 1988, having just completed 10 weeks of the most grueling, mentally taxing and physically demanding experience of my life, I made a solemn vow to myself. Once I was finished with my military service, I was going to find out why, in all my years of schooling, I was not made aware of the relationship between power and leadership.

What was ironic was that instead of graduating basic training and beginning a military career, I should have been graduating high school with my friends back in Winnipeg. As I stood at attention listening to the commander give his speech about how well we had performed, and congratulating the top cadet with the awarding of the Commandant's Shield, I should have been listening to one of my friends give a valedictorian speech. And it was this difference in what was required to achieve greatness, in these two very different and distinct power structures of Canadian society, that I began to understand the relationship between power and leadership. This understanding raised serious doubts and questions in my mind about what kind of leaders we were preparing for the future outside of military life.

Still standing on that parade ground, I realized I would not have to leave the military to begin my search for answers; they were with me all along, it was only that I hadn't recognized what was going on. The path of my public school education was so subtle and the intent so well-concealed that I had not understood that power and leadership were deliberately separated; their definition purposefully altered from their natural meaning. Never in all my days that I attended public school were *power* and *leadership* ever uttered in the same breath by a teacher. In fact, the two words were kept as far apart as possible from one another, creating a disconcerting tale of denial, coercion and manipulation now visible to my naked eye.

Looking back, I could see clearly that there were no high school classes offering insight into the aspects and nature of power in Canada. Nor was this concept of power taught at trade school. And even if you are one of the few that get to go to university, you would be hard-pressed to find a course that delves into the concept of power and the role it plays in Canadian society. Talking with friends from the pizzeria who were working their way through university, it seemed to me that there might be a hint of power in the humanities and the arts; there are traces of power in a philosophy course, and in the faculty of law. Despite power surrounding you all day long, you can't touch it, and nor will the subject itself be broached by your professor.

In Canada, it would seem that power is an enigmatic thing; the concept of power is scattered throughout your school years, and follows you constantly on the journey of life, but offers no guideposts that allow you to create a grand picture of its use and disbursement in this country. Unless you are specifically looking for it, there is no way for the average mind to capture its complexity, no signs or directions that show you how to navigate the Canadian power structure that exists inside our society in general.

In refusing to acknowledge and properly inform youth of the existence of power and its

many dimensions, we are not only cheating our society of the strong and capable leaders of tomorrow, but opening up a Pandora's Box of unintended consequences and misinterpretations of what power is.

For decades now, the public school system has been under the influence of the “me generation,” and their disjointed and myopic view of what constitutes excellence. Take, for example, the valedictory speech, an award given to the one person with the highest grade in their final year of high school; there is no award for coming in second, third or last. Where is the incentive to achieve if you cannot be that one person? What do you learn other than that you are not the best? Sure, you might have honour roll marks, but even that does not guarantee you a spot in university anymore; gender, ethnic and educational quotas stand in the way of many. In this simple light of examination, the valedictorian award seems a selfish “me” award.

A generation of wayward youth now lacks the confidence to believe in itself or its own ideas and answers. Those foolish enough to believe in this one-way system carry with them the mistaken belief that the one who gets the highest marks and wins the valedictorian award is naturally a just and benevolent leader; that intelligence is the sole hallmark of leadership; and that the smarter one is, the better leader he makes. If this was true, I ask you, would not every member of Mensa¹³ be in a position of power and leadership?

Another false promise of this public school award is the equating of excellence with that of money. The valedictorian receives the scholarship; only the very top of the honour roll get the bursaries and grants. The message? Only top marks are rewarded with money. For all others there is no reward, just a number on a report card; everyone not given an award will be seen as equal without distinction—no leadership opportunities or skills explored for these young people, their diplomas simply an empty victory without ever having expanded their potential or explored their leadership capabilities.

This narrow system of achievement leads to apathy amongst the youth, creating with it the greatest false promise of all: that for those whose life path takes them through public school, trade school or a public university money is power. For these people, money will only be credit and debt; the chains that bind them to poverty and the never-ending burden of the middle class.

If your friends are like mine, they don't care about power in their youth. From watching my friends, you get the impression that they don't need someone to tell them about power; at this age, many acknowledge that they don't need it—it would just get in the way of having fun and experiencing life. In the frame of mind that encapsulates you when you are young, you instinctively know power will be there when you need it down the road.

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mensa_International

But will it? In the minds of many young people, power, like money, will come their way as they get their careers going, and with a snap of the fingers, leadership will be bestowed. But what kind of leader would they be?

For those stuck in the public school system, those who are genuinely interested in leadership when they are young, what avenue exists for their development? Truly, what process in our public education system allows youth to develop into independent-minded individuals capable of navigating the rest of us through troubled times?

Do I really want to follow those elected to my high school student council? At that level of politics, election is merely a popularity contest populated by students in their last year of high school—a reward for the most popular, just another notch in the belt of privileged? Do we look to the realm of sport for our leaders or for the development of leadership skills? It certainly is a possibility, but unfortunately, sports is only an option for the few talented athletes capable of performing at a high degree of excellence. The majority are confined to cheering in the bleachers. Thus, most youth leave public high school with little opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

What kind of foundation is this for those who choose to spring forth into our communities and job markets and choose not to attend university? Are we not just preparing the majority of our youth to be followers? But who to follow remains the question. Is the public university just another carefully crafted and choreographed path of manufactured leadership? Does it not simply repeat the high school scenario to a more sophisticated degree? Does the student council at any Canadian university properly combine the concepts of power and leadership? Is a student election and governing student body not also an exercise based upon popularity; a room populated with like-minded friends and acquaintances?

If you have any doubt that there is a problem, even at the university level, all you have to do is listen to today's leaders who are just coming into their own. They have become nothing but simple bricks in a wall and team players; their vocabulary and lexicon is filled with hollow words like "manager of information," "team leader," and "facilitator." Although my time in the army was relatively short, I was well aware of the fact that I could not manage an infantry unit up a hill into enemy fire to seize an objective.¹⁴

Now, it also seems apparent that not everyone is capable or interested in leading a platoon anywhere; it is not necessary that every plumber, electrician, nurse, truck driver, lawyer doctor, engineer, accountant and IT consultant partake in military training. But it sure would seem important that somewhere along the way they have the opportunity to exercise their leadership skills, allowing them to realize that they do not necessarily always have to be a follower; they can and should listen to their own inner voice or ideas.

As we marched off the parade ground to our graduation party, the more I thought about

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<http://repository.law.ttu.edu/bitstream/handle/10601/1309/A%20Short%20Comparison%20of%20Military%20Leadership.pdf?sequence=1/p.2>

the relationship between power and leadership, the more I realized that it is a very complex issue that will warrant more investigation in the future. But at least I was able to see one thing clearly, and even though I didn't win the Commandant's Shield, the experience afforded me the insight to know that being valedictorian, or even an attempt to reach for that award, offered neither an introduction to nor an understanding of the nature of power; and it would not provide a path forward in developing any leadership skills I might possess.

When I finally got home on my first leave of absence from the army, my best friend confronted me with the fact that I had missed his graduation. I said that was true, but I also pointed out that he had missed mine.

The Wilkie Revolt

A year after leaving the Canadian Army, I finally finished school and received my diploma from the University of Winnipeg Collegiate. Instead of attending my graduation ceremony, I decided to leave Winnipeg and head out once again for my uncle's farm outside of Wilkie, Saskatchewan. Since the year I started second grade out there, I had managed to spend eight consecutive summers enjoying their hospitality and the laidback lifestyle of country living, despite my home being in Winnipeg.

My grandparents, like everyone else except the First Nations, of course, came to this country from somewhere else; in the early 1900s they came here as immigrants from Eastern Europe, nothing more than peasants with two infants tucked under their arms. Once here, they settled in the central portion of Saskatchewan and broke the land by hand, acre by acre, and slowly continued to build their family.

Over time, the family grew and the children worked the land like their parents. My mother Lorraine was the last of eight children. With lots of hard work, the small parcel of land that made up the original homestead was expanded from a simple plot to one that fed and sustained not only our immigrant family but also the people of Canada. As the years passed, they survived the Great Depression of the 1930s and the extreme winters of the 1950s, enjoyed the prosperous 1960s, endured Trudeau's price controls, national energy program and 20% interest rates of the 1970s, and managed to stay on the land despite drought and low crop prices in the 1980s.

By the time I started second grade at St. George Elementary in the 1970s, the family farm that my mother had grown up on had been eclipsed and incorporated into the farms that my two uncles, Leo and Eugene, had built for themselves over the years.

Uncle Eugene married Joyce Berezowski and they built their home half a mile down the road. Together they produced and raised a flock of seven children, eight if you count the wayward little boy who visited every summer. And because of their generosity, kindness and teachings, I learned important lessons that a single child with no brothers and sisters

misses out on, and was treated and accepted like one of their own children. I learned the importance of sibling rivalries, sharing and getting along.

In fact, through the example set by my entire family living out there in rural Saskatchewan, through their guidance and helping hands, they instilled and invested in me over the years a set of high family and societal values, the foundation of a no-nonsense work ethic, and a strong moral understanding of right and wrong—a set of lessons and experiences that would be put to the test on a spring day in April 1990.

You do not expect abject power to come racing into your life on a sleepy Saturday morning in the country, but that is exactly what happened that foggy and drizzly spring day.

With a simple phone call, word went out from the town of Wilkie at 8:00 a.m. that the fertilizer plant was going into receivership. My cousin Randy happened to be working at the fertilizer plant that morning when it was learned a court order had been issued to confiscate all the assets of the business, including all the pre-paid fertilizer that was sitting on site and in storage.

Now, most might say, “So what. It’s only fertilizer.” For those who do not understand farming in the 1990s, I’ll explain. Most crops, if not all, from oats to canola are genetically modified. Without fertilizer, the plants simply do not grow properly; the yield of any crop planted without fertilizer would drop by as much as 50% or more. From a financial perspective, most farmers, including my family, did not have tens of thousands of dollars more to spend at seeding time; most farmers were already maxed out on their bank loans. This news came in the middle of seeding—the window for getting the crop in the ground in time to avoid the devastating frost that can ruin a fall harvest was rapidly closing; there was no time to look for other suppliers with the vast quantities of fertilizer needed since so many in the area would now be in need as well. You would think that someone would have understood this before issuing that court order.

My cousin Sheldon left first with one of the grain trucks, and I drove Uncle Eugene into town with the other about 30 minutes later. When we arrived in town, we lined up behind dozens of other trucks already sitting and idling, waiting their turn to get loaded with fertilizer.

Sitting there in line, my uncle confessed to me his utter shock and dismay at this turn of events. Never had he thought that in Canada he would face a situation where something that was rightfully his would be confiscated by the government without recourse or due process. And this came from a man who had great standing in the community; he had not only served as a councillor with the municipality, but had also worked tirelessly for the community for years, serving both on the hospital and Catholic Church boards.

By the time noon rolled around, the whole town knew what was happening. Food and sandwiches were brought from town diners and restaurants to everyone at the plant. Others staked out the roads on the outskirts of town, on the look-out for semi-trucks hired

by the government to haul out the fertilizer. Some kept their eyes on the local RCMP detachment. But there was not much the small outpost of Mounties could do; they sat in their police car and wrote down license plate numbers of farm trucks as they left the fertilizer plant.

Inside the plant, things were frantic but organized. Each farmer took only what was his. Paperwork was processed in the office before he could load. But by the early afternoon it became evident that things were going too slowly, so the farmers punched holes into the west and east sides of the building to allow for two more augers to be used.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the government semi-trucks showed up but were blocked from coming into town. After doing a complete circle of the town, they left and were never seen again. As for us, it was just after 4:00 in the afternoon that we managed to get the first of our two trucks loaded, and I rode with my uncle back to the farm. My cousin Sheldon finally showed up with the second truck around 6:00 p.m. in the evening. He said that the sheriff's office had finally showed up with the court order. When I asked if everyone got their fertilizer out, he said they had.

Despite the damage caused by sticking in the extra two augers, this still was probably the most orderly of revolts in Canadian history.

Eight Little Dirty Words You Can't Say on Canadian Television

When you grow up in Canada, it is almost impossible not to become immersed in American culture or entertainment—the *Pax Americana*, as some would call it. English Canada is flooded with everything American. From movies, television shows and music to the magazines and books that fill the shelves of the bookstores, American culture can not only be seen and experienced, but *lived*. And the belief that you are really an American trapped in a Canadian passport is a choice, a choice that encompasses a power of being and understanding that only the individual Canadian can incorporate into their experience of living in Canada, a power that can also help the individual understand the many incongruities and artificial textures found in Canadian culture.

It was through this choice of experiencing and enjoying American culture that I learned about George Carlin and his comedy routine in which he came to the conclusion that there are “seven dirty little words” that you couldn't say on television.¹⁵ He used this to draw people's attention to the moral code and conduct between what American media thought people should experience versus the reality of everyday American life.

It was in the early part of the 1990s when I spent much of my time with the artistic and intelligentsia of Winnipeg that I realized that Canada itself had a similar list of dirty little words, except in Canada, there was an eighth little word that was not allowed.

And that word is *power*.

¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_dirty_words

Now, it is not the word itself that is not permitted to be printed, uttered or communicated. Rather it is the definition of power that is not discussed in the open. In fact, if you are observant enough, you will not see that little word and its Canadian meaning mentioned in the newspapers, discussed on talk radio, or examined in a documentary. An atmosphere where power is not discussed has had a dramatic effect upon the artist and intellectual living in English Canada.

The artist is only as powerful as the work he presents to his audience. In Canada, the problem is not so much the creation of art—Canada is filled with creative people working in every conceivable medium from painting to sculpture to performance art, film and music. Nor is the funding of artistic endeavours the problem: hundreds of millions of dollars in grants are available from every level of government in Canada. Even the exhibition of the Canadian perspective is not a problem: art galleries, radio stations, and theaters dot the countryside.

The problem is the lack of power discussed by the English Canadian artist. The artist, writer and filmmaker in English Canada more often than not refuses for one reason or another not to confront the issue of power; the artist is more comfortable writing books that appeal to their friends, or produce and direct films that will secure that next grant from government funding agencies. In the Canadian context, the English Canadian artist refrains from criticizing the role of government. And this lack of “speaking truth to power” is reflected in the lack of an interested audience; most Canadians prefer not to become engaged with local artists, avoiding screenings of film or television shows and shunning the offerings of the local theatre company.

Yet, just because most Canadian artistic work lacks power, it does not mean that it is completely without influence. When used in the defense of the powerless, it still has great potential. Take, for example, my experience in 1992 with a small group of multiply-disabled individuals who managed to remove themselves from an institutional setting; most individuals with this level of incapacity are destined to live life as wards of the state in a place like the St. Amant Centre,¹⁶ their lives determined by medical boards, doctors and legal guardians. But with the help of advocates and professionals dedicated to the concept of independent living,¹⁷ they escaped their medical prison and managed to create their own community in a building in downtown Winnipeg.

Then, after just a couple of years, and recognizing the cost of this program, the government was ready to shut down the pilot project and return them all to the institution. In this fight, the government had everything on its side: budgetary concerns and mounting expense, medical opinions about feasibility and safety—they managed to even argue that the general interest of the public was in their favour, and that no one was interested in such topics. The government could commission studies, hire lawyers and health experts, and twist the arms of medical boards to rule in their favour.

Yet, a carefully crafted 20-minute documentary extolling the merits of life and freedom

¹⁶ <http://www.stamant.mb.ca/>

¹⁷ <http://www.ilcanada.ca/article/il-centres-across-canada-166.asp>

outside the institution—one that put a human face on this story of the individual’s struggle to be free, which was offered to anyone interested in seeing a short glimpse into a human life that really didn’t exist prior to leaving the institution—was enough to keep the government at bay.

As the old saying goes, videotape, like the pen, is mightier than the sword. And power for the Canadian artist exists; all you need is the courage to use it.

***The Indian Act, Indian Affairs, the Department of Justice
and the Persecution of the Powerless***

Like most people, I had never heard of The John Howard Society.¹⁸

But that changed in 1994 when I was hired to create a short educational video for their organization in Winnipeg. Until I got involved with this organization that works within the prison system trying to help and rehabilitate inmates back into society, I did not fully understand the scope and reach that the justice system had. Nor did I fully realize who makes up the majority of those found within the walls of Canada’s prisons and jails; the First Nations peoples.

Growing up with countless friends from many cultures and backgrounds, varying levels of prosperity and education or experience, I was never taught anything in-depth about First Nations culture at school, and only registered their existence in relation to the stereotypical references in American movies and television shows I watched. Certainly, they were my classmates while I briefly attended school in North Battleford, but other than that, I only saw them on the streets of downtown Winnipeg where they were just like everyone else: nameless people walking about doing their business.

I did not have any native friends until I met Ryan Black¹⁹ and Adam Beach,²⁰ two young and aspiring actors. Both had tremendous personalities and loads of talent. But neither spoke a lot about where he came from, nor about his respective family in Winnipeg.

My first introduction to the plight of the First Nations in Canada occurred when I went on a walk-through of the Winnipeg Remand Centre, the shooting location for the video I was producing. As we walked the floors on a complete tour of the place, I noticed the overwhelming majority of inmates were native.

It was not long after that visit to the Winnipeg Remand Centre that I tagged along with one of John Howard’s social workers on a night when she taught a course at the Headingly Provincial prison, and I was able to fully comprehend the injustice and utter destruction that has been wrought upon a great people.

¹⁸ <http://www.johnhoward.ca/>

¹⁹ <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0085496/>

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Beach

Walking through the doors and accompanied by a guard, we made our way to her class at the prison. Through the hall and in the main area of the prison, all I could see were young native inmates. And as the guard went to get the last of those who had signed up for her class, I saw that everyone she would instruct that night were native; some were stoned, most were reclusive and all seemed lost.

It was in the days after visiting the provincial jail that I found myself in a conversation with a client of John Howard who just happened to be a native gang leader. He was no older than 25 and had already spent most of his life in custody, whether it be in foster homes, juvenile detention centres, or in Headingly prison.

We talked about my experience so far with the John Howard Society, and my feelings about what I had seen. He asked me if I had heard about Oka,²¹ and I told him I had. I also told him that I could now understand the anger. He suggested that I needed to do more research on his people and their history in Canada. I asked if he had any good ideas as to where I should start. “Start with the *Indian Act*,” he said. It was toward the end of our conversation that he pointed out that from his perspective, “If it weren’t for the sworn duty of the police to uphold Canadian law, they would be just another street gang.”

Since I was already spending most of my spare time in the Great Law Library in the Law Courts building in Winnipeg on personal business, it was easy to locate a copy of the federal statute passed by parliament. As soon as I traversed the table of contents, I realized that this truly was an Orwellian document if there ever was one. Within the context of this document the lives of every First Nations man and woman are directed from cradle to grave—a life within the free and democratic state of Canada that is not his or her own to live.

Reading the *Indian Act*, I could understand what my new friend was trying to convey with his statement that the police would just be another street gang if they did not uphold Canadian law. From the *Indian Act* came his people’s oppression; from the Department of Indian Affairs came the power to administer this oppression, and from the Department of Justice came the power to enforce it. Going over the amendments, it was plain that power was taken away from them at the moment this law was enacted by parliament in 1867; it allowed the state to prevent round dances and display their cultural traditions; it prevented them from earning a living on their land by preventing them from selling their wares or agricultural products off reserve; it gave the state the right to put all their children in residential schools, and it prevented them from voting in elections until as late as 1985.

For the First Nations peoples, power is not to be found in living within the rules and laws of Canada; power came from their identity, from being true to themselves. To a great extent, this identity is one the government has for over a century denied. For that young First Nations gang leader, the Department of Justice is the enforcer of his oppression. Where the average Canadian sees rules, laws and regulations that form the pragmatic and working foundation of society, he sees just the opposite. Even though the residential

²¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oka_Crisis

schools have been closed down, the assimilation of the First Nations continues on unabated in the prison system.

Were it not for the staff of the John Howard society and their desire to educate me in their world, I probably would not understand why the Department of Justice was not interested in creating programs within the walls of their prisons, showing little interest in the re-education of the prisoner and limiting their ability to educate themselves for a return to society.

The Department of Justice in Canada enforces the *Indian Act* upon those within its jurisdiction and control; it has no interest in separating the “criminal” from the “First Nations” inmate. This perspective is reinforced by the fact that the plight of the native is mirrored both in life on the reserve and in our Canadian prisons. First Nations people are housed in overcrowded conditions, given little in the way of education and live the life of the state. Few experience their own traditional ways of living or cultural identity. You have to wonder whether this is the intended outcome of the system itself, or whether it is justice or cultural assimilation by just another name.

How many people do the government departments of Indian Affairs and Department of Justice employ who are deft in the execution of their duties? Unless they find themselves on the wrong end of the law, or victims of a crime, or living near a native reserve, millions of Canadians will never notice the life of the First Nations or the power that is enforced upon them.

For non-First Nations Canadians forever unaware that the rule of law and the *Indian Act* are one and the same, for all who are not First Nations, this power and its enforcement is the plaster that binds Canadian society together. But for the First Nations, it creates an appropriate artificial atmosphere through which social control is used not only to modify unacceptable behaviour, but to destroy an entire culture and the individuals who populate it.

Many Canadians only learn about the rule of law from one singular perspective; most politicians and the media focus on the issues of crime and punishment. But that is a small part of the Department of Justice and the legal system—how much time, money and resources defend the actions of the government itself, enforcing the mandate of Indian Affairs or other agencies with jurisdiction over the First Nations and their lands?

Were it not for the staff of the John Howard Society, I probably would not have understood just how intrusive the departments of Justice and Indian Affairs are in the lives of Canada’s First Nations peoples. Furthermore, an examination of the entire Canadian social-scape through the microscope of the Department of Justice and Indian Affairs shows the stark contrast between those who have power and those who do not.

As long as the *Indian Act* remains on the books and is enforced through various government departments an imbalance of power will remain between the First Nations

peoples and our government. Even more troubling is the fact that the longer this situation is allowed to continue, the greater the effort that will be required to put things right.

Canadian Economic and Political Power: the View from a Picket Line

In 1997, I found myself employed by Maple Leaf Meats in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. Within the first four months of my employment, the workers at Maple Leaf initiated a strike that would shut down every Maple Leaf meat plant in Canada, a labour action that was the largest in Canadian history, all in the hope of forestalling massive corporate changes of downsizing and rightsizing in the midst of a country already going through austerity. Faced with this situation, the union felt it had no choice but to argue and strike in an attempt to improve the position of the workers with an increase in benefits and wages.

As the days dragged into weeks and those weeks into months, I became involved in many a conversation about power, while contributing my share of picket hours each day, which earned me \$800 from the strike fund created by the union. From these engaging conversations which revealed the inner thoughts and ideas of my coworkers, I was able to form for the first time a comprehensive picture of what the average working Canadian thought about power, and how they related it to the realm of politics and economics in the waning years of the millennium.

Most, if not all, were very grateful that a social safety net had been created in the 1960s and 1970s to help ease the burden of people who found themselves displaced and at a disadvantage. Brought forth through socialist thinking in the mid-20th century, social spending was seen by many on the picket line as a progression of human compassion and caring for your fellow human being.

Some I talked to pointed out that, during this specific timeframe, even though the rich may have gotten richer, they (the working poor and middle classes) thought of themselves as being better off; they saw themselves slowly acquiring a pittance of wealth and prosperity that they had never known before. Their lives were not ones of misery their ancestors had known. No, theirs were lives of reasonable comfort. In the middle of the 20th century, some pointed out, power seemed to reside not only in the hands of the rich and the elite of the nation states, but also in the common people; the government was giving back to the people in the form of social programs and social spending.

One of the strike leaders made sure everyone knew that even corporate spending on the employee was substantial with regard to the benefits and salaries paid to workers. Pension plans, health care and other such benefits were the standard of the day. Because corporations contributed their fair share of taxes, poverty was lessened and people began to live with a little more dignity.

It was then I interjected that this no longer seemed the case. Western governments, including our own Canadian government with its austerity program of the past few years,

has been privatizing and even eliminating state-run agencies that enhanced the lives of its citizens—everything from electricity and home heating fuel to telephone service was becoming unaffordable. Furthermore, other laws aimed solely at the protection of the worker—especially injured workers who could now be forced back to work at an early stage in their recovery against medical advice due to company-structured programs more concerned with productivity and profit—had been eliminated.

Others pointed out that even the corporations and transnationals had turned their backs on their workers. Through skillful manipulation and marketing techniques, downsizing and rightsizing had become the buzzwords of corporate profitability. Pension plans were all but gone and health benefits remained only for white collar workers high enough on the corporate ladder. Salaries had been slashed. The idea of a raise in pay exists only for those on the top rungs of the corporate and financial ladder. Lifetime employment, once considered a standard of progress, is now something only read about in history books

From my personal reading, I made them aware that much of the Western world was talking about going to a four-day work week from the standard five, slashing the already miniscule 40-hour work week to 35 hours. This created even fewer full-time positions within the economy in favour of part-time help or a short-term contract, and allowed employers the freedom not to pay benefits of any kind. Someone noted that business talked endlessly about the virtues of capitalism, yet did not pay the wages necessary for the individual to work their way through the class system.

Someone who was my age pointed out that for our generation it was even worse. Our only options are internships where they must work for free or work multiple part-time jobs or short-term contracts just to enter the workforce, relegating us to poverty, a life of debt, forfeiting our chance at prosperity.

Politics exists within every nation state upon this planet. Politics is the means by which humans exert power over one another in an attempt to co-exist. Without politics, we would still be a savage beast as Voltaire once opined; without regard for anything remotely civilized.²² Through the laws, regulations and rules created by various legislatures in Canada, the rule of law is shaped and used as a tool upon which politics relies for stability and social control.

To better understand the extent which politics has over your life, it is first necessary to figure out what type of political system you reside in. I was surprised that many of my fellow strikers had no idea how to define or describe the current political system in Canada. It was a democracy, but what type? Was it a parliamentary democracy, a Westminster democracy or a republic? Could our democracy be described as being liberal or non-liberal? If it was a liberal democracy, where did our freedoms and rights come from? What was the difference between freedom and liberty?

²² Leigh, John. *Philosophical letters Or, Letters Regarding the English Nation*. p. 24.

Many I talked to on the picket line could not see why any of these distinctions mattered; many had no real interest in politics. Their attitude was best summed up in the question, “Why should I care?”

Now, that last question no doubt rings loud and clear in the ears of my generation; the apathy found within my friends and acquaintances here in Canada is off the charts. These questions are of little or no concern to those just out of university and too busy looking for work; to the middle class preoccupied with keeping food on the table for their children and the old too busy trying to stay one step ahead of death.

However, for the youth of tomorrow who will one day take the reins of political power in this country, it is crucial they understand early on that these questions swirling around today’s political system are the invisible wires that will control their lives.

It is important to question why some of you will find yourselves single mothers living on welfare. Why you cannot pay your bills; why your friends who have graduated from university are unemployed; why, despite all your efforts, you still live with your parents—a depressing situation, a future without hope.

As for those of us who are a little older, it is now possible to see that these political questions of power provide clues as to why you cannot pay down your student debt from 30 years ago; why you have no savings for retirement; why you cannot afford to see the dentist; why with interest your house is going to cost you twice the purchase price. Poverty, crime, and addiction can all be attributed to each and every question that surrounds Canadian democracy.

Many on the picket line blamed the politicians for being corrupt, no good and serving the interests of the rich. And who could blame them? Canadian politicians, duly elected and supposedly governing with the will of all the people, continue on this course of public service reversal, dismantling program after program that helped maintain a decent standard of living for those who could not completely help themselves. One person suggested that if austerity is not beaten back here in Canada, it would eventually reach across the entire Western world; billions in savings eventually transferred into the bank accounts of the elite through the slashing of social spending budgets, and privatizing the assets and resources of the state that belong to everyone

I asked if it were possible that the voting public of Canada never had any power to begin with.

Since this was a union trailer, there was plenty of information scattered about concerning the ideas and causes of the political left. In fact, someone had even brought a book about Karl Marx. So it wasn’t surprising when someone said that what was needed was a real workers state.

Even at the height of the Cold War, debate here in Canada never really focused on the central core discrepancy between the competing systems of communism and democracy,

completely ignoring or forging a real debate around the question of “who holds power?” in either system. Instead, the majority of the debate focused upon the economic model of each combatant: state control of the economy versus a free market; five-year plans versus small business and the role of the entrepreneur. Never did the discussion focus on the underlying philosophy of how these systems of government worked—faults, I pointed out, that were never fully explored in school to the level needed to really address and examine the problems of political power, its use and its distribution.

Ironically, if this had happened, I boldly asserted, you would have seen that both the communist system and the Canadian parliamentary democratic use of the process known as an election^{23[1]} were of similar design, given, for example, that the Politburo of the former Soviet Union was an elected body of the members of the Communist Party along the same lines and with the same principles that govern elections in Canada, each drawing their electorate from a pool of voters made up of society at large.

But before I could continue, one of the picketers who was politely listening to my comparison of Canadian parliamentary democracy to communism finally stood up and shouted, “Hold on!”

She pointed out that there were big differences between the political system of the old Soviet Union and the parliamentary democracy found here in Canada. We had individual freedom, opportunities and protections for a voice of expression, guaranteed rights allowing for the opportunity to create associations, and the right to express a religious conscience.

I acknowledged that Canadian law protected our liberty and human rights. But the fact remained that both systems shared one major similarity: there was a distinct split between those who ruled and those who did not, those who had wealth and those who did not, between those who had power and those who did not.

Yet as we sat in the heated trailer bought by the union so we would not freeze during the harsh Canadian winter as we picketed, there was no utopia in our little corner of the world. Many of the strikers saw themselves on the edge of a dark and bleak expanse; like millions of others, they too were only a paycheque away from relative squalour and economic poverty. Addiction, abuse and violence are a way of life for far too many. This was not what was promised to the people of the West, or to the world, if the ideas of representational democracy and capitalism were allowed to reign supreme. Someone asked what happened to the peace dividend that everyone talked about after the fall of communism. Some thought that all that was given in the past had been given strictly for the purpose of securing for the future a powerful and all-encompassing platform upon which the wealthy and well-connected rule over the people of Canada for their benefit alone.

The similarity between the two political systems is a glaring eyesore in the daylight of today, now that there is no opposition to our current political and economic system. It is

^{23[1]} <http://www.stamant.mb.ca/>

evident in the structure and process of Canadian parliamentary democracy; a fact well hidden and protected from public knowledge. Our system of governance offers, on the one hand, an open society for limited individual fulfillment and on the other, a limited and controlled environment in which its people can exist—an artificial atmosphere of democratic process and outcome.

It is this fundamental fact that has been lost upon those who champion the disadvantaged today in the name of social justice or social-democracy.²⁴

Power, I pointed out, seemed to be a very elusive thing in either system.

Then one day, as happens with all good things, the strike ended.

After nearly eight months of picketing, the union settled for the same final offer the company had introduced back before the strike started. And when we finally did return to work, those who walked back into that North Battleford plant were not the same as those who walked out.

Some never made that trek back; they had found employment elsewhere out of necessity. For some, marriages had collapsed, and others moved away. Most felt betrayed since all they earned for their hardship was a signing bonus of a few hundred dollars after taxes. Elsewhere, the collateral damage of the strike was enormous: in Edmonton, the Maple Leaf plant was closed for good and hundreds of workers were out of work permanently.

As for me, I had made great progress in laying down the foundation for a book about politics.

Thus, we can see the beginnings of an answer to our question of individual emancipation. Within Canadian society, there exists an unevenly fractured and dissected power, one that is unbalanced and, to a great extent, hoarded by a few to influence the many. This situation exists across all sectors and industries. Power exists throughout all segments of society but it coalesces inside groups, organizations, and systems. It is this collective reality of today's Canada that remains a stumbling block to the eventual freedom of the individual from oppression and subjugation.

It is this fundamental challenge that the youth will have to overcome if they wish to make changes for a better future. In the pursuit of a just political discourse and improved economic outcomes, the youth will have to confront the issue of this overbearing acquisition of collective power. They should not look to days past or ideas filled with false promise.

Two things must be stressed. When vetting new ideas for their impact and examining the consequences of wielding power, you must always remain vigilant and prudent—for it

²⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_democracy

must be remembered that in human affairs we can only progress forward one step at a time, but when we stumble, we can go back a thousand paces in one fell swoop.

And, unless the individual has exercisable power, there can be no emancipation.

HOW THE DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY CHANGED

The Little Lie That Is Canadian Parliamentary Democracy

It is not my intention to go back through history and explain the entire process by which all Western nation states developed their particular versions and definitions of democracy. I will, however, concentrate on the development and evolution of parliamentarianism, specifically its use and application in Canada today. By exploring Canada's specific form of parliamentarianism, and the use of its principles and concepts throughout Canadian society, it becomes possible to see how this definition not only differs drastically from an earlier system of democracy, but that it also deviates in theory from the core principles and ideas of democracy that were the driving force behind the philosophy of the 17th and 18th centuries. The intellectual work that laid down the foundation for the eventual creation of the United States of America, the first French republic and the Swiss model of direct democracy.²⁵

By exploring a specific historical and contemporary context of parliamentary democracy in a country like Canada, it becomes possible to create a template to help others in the Western world see the deficiencies and inadequacies of their own parliamentary or democratic systems.

This discrepancy or change of definition of democracy not only represents the cornerstone to understanding the great difference between contemporary European and Canadian political philosophy when compared to their contemporary American equivalent, but it also represents the second pillar regarding our question of what prevents the issue of emancipation from flourishing in Canada and many European countries. It exposes issues of delegation and accountability as the main issues standing in the way of individual participation and involvement, and creating a situation whereby those who govern do so in the name of democracy only, giving credence and meaning to the question as to why the young men and women of today see no net benefit in participating in parliamentary politics.

This essay originally began because of a conversation I had in the 1990s with a young woman in her early 20s living in Winnipeg. She was a university undergraduate in her second year of university and she said she saw "no use whatsoever for democracy in Canada." She had never voted nor did she have any intention of doing so in the near future.

She was working hard to achieve her goals of attaining a degree, in what, I can no longer remember. Nor can I recall what she looked like. But I do remember her because she did not debate or discuss matters in a meaningful and thoughtful way, but liked to argue. It was during this heated conversation she also said to me that my American ideas and right-wing philosophy would never amount to anything.

²⁵ Hudeček, Tomáš. *Democracy and Its Subtypes: Quantitative Inquiry and the Regime Question*. http://is.muni.cz/th/13603/fss_m/tom_hudecek_democracy_and_its_subtypes.pdf

This was a conversation that remained with me, and became the driving force behind my attempts to see the world from her perspective, to try to understand why she had such a dim view of democracy. Unfortunately, I was not able to answer many of her questions about our democracy at the time, and the argument ended without me changing her attitude towards democracy. But it did foster my awareness that many young people in Canada shared her opinions, and if democracy was to be saved in Canada, the key to saving it would have to begin with unraveling the mystery of the origins of such an unfavourable disposition toward democracy and its usefulness.

The Problem of Political Delegation in Contemporary Canadian Society

Is democracy simply an election cycle that occurs only once every five years, when the people are asked for their opinion about whom they would like to fill the appropriate parliamentary seat in Ottawa?

In its ideal form, then, parliamentary democracy is a chain of delegation and accountability, from the voters to the ultimate policy-makers, in which at each stage, a principal—say, the young woman I spoke with—delegates to an agent whom she has conditionally authorized to act in her name and place.²⁶

Of the 308 members who sat in parliament in the 1990s, a person living in Canada had the chance to elect one member for a five-year period. But it also must be specifically stated that even though she makes a choice, there is no guarantee that who she votes for will make it into parliament or into government; everything is dependent on the winning party in the election process and the relationship of her choice to this outcome.

Now, let us look at where else she can exercise her democratic rights in the Canadian political structure of delegation. Living in Manitoba, she has the right to vote for her representative in the provincial legislature every four years.²⁷ In terms of municipal elections, say, electing her choice for mayor, a representative on city council,²⁸ or her choice for the school board,²⁹ she will be asked only once every 4 years.

Through these five choices, she has delegated to her representatives the power to act on her behalf. Yet it is possible none will make it to power; all going down to defeat in the election. In the best case scenario, all five could make it into elected office. And this, then, is the end of the democratic process for our young lady living in Winnipeg until the next election cycle; from these few representatives, all power eventually flows throughout the entire state.

²⁶ <http://fds.oup.com/www.oup.com/pdf/13/9780198297840.pdf/p.19>

²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fixed_election_dates_in_Canada

²⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winnipeg_City_Council

²⁹ http://www.winnipeg.ca/clerks/docs/election_services/qual_trustee.stm

A Contemporary Question of Legitimacy: Downstream Political Accountability

Democratic duty fulfilled, does that young lady in Winnipeg now feel left out and without influence in her community? Does this limited act of voting for so few instill in her a feeling of powerlessness and loss of control over her own life?

It is up to these elected representatives at the federal, provincial and municipal levels to fill the thousands of seats on the hundreds of boards and councils in Canada that disseminate the power of the state. From these positions, our young Winnipegger's life, and the lives of everyone else in the country, are directly and indirectly affected.

From those who sit in parliament and represent the government, the appropriate appointments are made to the judiciary: judges at the federal court who sit across the country to those who sit in judgment of the unemployed or morally corrupt through governor-in-council appointments to the quasi-judicial Employment Insurance Board of Referees or the Human Rights Tribunal. Even Crown prosecutors who work in the Department of Justice to those who sit on the parole boards and various other appointed boards are hired and fired by the representative.

From the representative who sits in the governing caucus in the provincial legislature more appointments flow; from marketing boards that control the state-run agriculture landscape which includes egg and dairy production to those who head the various Crown corporations, all these conduits of power and influence are out of reach in the democratic process to the young woman from Winnipeg and everyone else in Canada.

Was that young university student discouraged even further in her understanding and belief of democracy in Canada? Was she asking the same question as so many others?

“Who are these people?”

What is most disturbing is not this lack of democratic legitimacy, but the fact that most appointees come mainly from the rank and file supporters of those who were elected, creating a politicized guiding hand, directing social behaviour and norms, defining the political destiny of the state, and setting forth all economic laws and regulations—all forming the foundation of Canada's Rule of Law.³⁰

As for accountability, with the limited resources available in the 1990s, it soon becomes evident for anyone interested in finding out what goes on at this level of political decision-making that it would take weeks and months to compile an accurate picture of what these people are doing. You might be able to track down each board and council member, but to find out what was being discussed, or what decisions were being made was a near impossibility; minutes of meetings are not available anywhere, and in many circumstances only accredited journalists (accredited by the appropriate board), can have access to these decision-makers in Canadian democracy.

³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_law

It would seem that in Canada, democracy only goes so far.

A Shared History Between European and Canadian Parliamentaryism

Even if the young woman from Winnipeg could work her way past the deficiencies that delegation presents, or the issue of downstream accountability in the various institutions, boards and councils found in the administration of the state today, it is possible there is more to her distaste for Canadian parliamentary democracy.

Canadian parliamentaryism, like all forms of parliamentary government, can be seen as a direct descendent of parliamentary democracy in Britain.³¹ Unlike other forms of government, such as American federalism which was a product of deliberate institutional design, parliamentary democracy evolved over a number of centuries.³² It was a slow crawl from its inception in England in 1688, with parliament prevailing in the dispute with King James II,³³ until it finally reached Canadian shores with Confederation.³⁴

But unlike the success of the American revolution—with its Declaration of Independence and entrenched Bill of Rights, its three little words “We the people...,” the embracing of concepts like individualism and liberty—or the subsequent revolution in France, with their pronouncement upon the world of “*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*,”³⁵ these ideas, concepts and principles of these two great pronouncements of democratic right were already drowned out by the time parliamentaryism became the governing law of Canada.

Forgotten by 1867 was that outward thrust of democracy into the world with the philosophical work of writers like John Locke,³⁶ David Hume³⁷ and Jean Jacques Rousseau.³⁸ Today, many equate or understand this line of thinking to be the founding definition of what is called liberalism.³⁹

However, liberalism and its influence on early parliamentaryism in England and eventually in Canada, was somewhat circumspect: in England there were many differing opinions regarding just how such concepts like democracy, liberty, and equality would best be implemented to guarantee their truest intentions. And in the French colony in Quebec, democracy lived only a short time, as it did on the continent of Europe in France itself, replaced in descending order by the Jacobins, Napoleon, the monarchy, the Second Republic, and the Second Empire.⁴⁰

³¹ <http://fds.oup.com/www.oup.com/pdf/13/9780198297840.pdf/p.6>

³² Ibid. p. 6

³³ Ibid. p. 6

³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Confederation

³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libert%C3%A9,_%C3%A9galit%C3%A9,_fraternit%C3%A9

³⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke

³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hume

³⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau

³⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism>

⁴⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France_in_the_long_nineteenth_century

It was during this period of the 19th century that something began to emerge from Europe—a more radical and less-liberalizing ideology loosely based on the more popular ideas of this time; a push for less liberty and much less individualism; political thought diverted away from the core principles and belief in the importance of the individual, a philosophy turned outward, more attuned to ideas and policies that would benefit society as a whole.

This new line of political philosophy, social liberalism,⁴¹ is a line of political and intellectual thought that saw the merit and benefit of a powerful and dynamic central government. Although steeped in the declaration of the rights of man,⁴² this political concept offered quite a different picture in terms of political invention for the 19th century than the individual-driven democracies found in the American and French nations of the 18th century. In particular, this expanded liberal definition of democracy had little to do with the needs of specific individuals and more to do with the politics of choice and the need to secure collective prosperity.

Social liberalism and the fact that the monarchy still existed and ruled much of Europe during this time, combined to create a toxic brew of power and influence within the Canadian parliamentary democracy of 1867. Even though many countries eventually evolved into constitutional monarchies—Sweden in 1809, Spain in 1812, Norway in 1814, Portugal in 1822, Belgium in 1831, Piedmontese Statuto in Italy in 1848, Austria in 1867 and Germany in 1871⁴³—Canada experienced the creation of a constitution⁴⁴ and parliament in 1867.⁴⁵ The historical path Canada followed did not begin as an institution that offered the people any real power to control their lives—it merely added to the interesting political spin on the idea of rule by political party majority, which the early social-liberal democratic states of the 19th century placed upon the central concept of democracy.

In essence, what early Canadian democracy said to the masses was, “Here is your individual right to vote in the general election and here are your candidates. Through these people who are your representatives, the country will be run. So cast your own personal ballot in total freedom within this choice and there your democracy shall exist.” And should you ask or demand too much, we your representatives can always appeal to the monarchy!

⁴¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_liberalism

⁴² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_the_Rights_of_Man_and_of_the_Citizen

⁴³ Constitutions and Political Theory/Author: Jan-Erik Lane/1996/p.65

⁴⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Confederation

⁴⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Canadian_Parliament

The Forgotten Influence of Capitalism on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy

Comparing Canadian parliamentary democracy with 17th and 18th century political philosophy is one thing, but comparing it with ancient antiquity is yet quite another. The interesting thing about today's political reality in Canada and the classical version of how democracy was defined in ancient Greece is how far apart the two really are. And the greatest factor in this discrepancy is the presence of what is today termed *capitalism*.⁴⁶

The example of our politically neutered young Winnipegger was known to the thinkers of the past. Certainly not in such specific terms as the example, but the principles behind the example were known. They were confronted by the same problems of tyranny and oppression in their own time.

That is why the ancient Greeks pursued the ideas and principles found in democracy, defining power as they did to allow for greater access by everyone on an equal level;⁴⁷ it is also why the architects of the American Constitution invested the power or sovereignty of the state in the individuals of the country and not a central governing authority.

These structures devoted to the concept of freedom allowed for change to occur as the people of the state willed it. Classical definitions of democracy have always incorporated the importance of the individual at its core. Most who live in Canada, like the young university student in Winnipeg, have forgotten this fact for the simple reason that democracy has not been defined like that for generations.

In fact, if you look closely at those nations that make up the European Union today, you will see that the parliamentary democracies that do exist have also forgone this original or traditional definition, replaced by something quite the contrary. In many respects, democracy has been corrupted by a definition that has as its credo less to do with the prosperity and well-being of the individual, and more to do with the creation of wealth and political power for the well-connected.

This deviation was brought about early on in the defining years of parliamentary democracy, a period of time that extends before the revolutions of the 18th century to a period when people were in the final stages of consolidating themselves into nation states.⁴⁸ It coincided with the replacing of self-evident truths and notions of liberty or individual equality with the more solidarity-leaning social liberalism. It was during this period of defining moments and arguments that the issues and demands of mercantilism⁴⁹ had the greatest impact on how democracy was viewed and implemented, a focus on money and wealth creation that would eventually trump the prevailing attitudes of individual liberty and democratic openness.

The early stages of mercantilism centred mainly around trade between business and

⁴⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitalism>

⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athenian_democracy

⁴⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutions_of_1848

⁴⁹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercantilism>

nations that were relatively close to one another in Europe. What the wealthy and well-connected needed was a system of government that could enforce a rule of law between various groups within society, and with neighbouring nations, while allowing for the greatest possible flexibility in regards to movement and profit. This flexibility and ability to manoeuvre without interference was only possible if it could be cemented in law and continually administered through a legislative body that could propose and amend laws as required.

However, for the wealthy and elite, this continual proposing and amending could have its down side. From their perspective, it was doubly important that some form of power be invested in a separate body of authority away from the legislature. It was eventually concluded that an executive authority of the nation be created wherein maintaining these laws would be paramount, creating the atmosphere and the power to create and enforce law and order.

In essence, mercantilism needed the most unrestricted yet legally binding form of government possible. It needed a form of government that could provide protection for the wealthy and their investments on the one hand, while on the other, provide the correct type of atmosphere that could get everyone into the economic race equally, but still maintain control and power over the masses.

Today, we understand this mercantilist system of wealth creation as *capitalism*. And this economic system is built around two very basic principles. The first is the need for all business to compete with as little government interference as possible. The industrialists and capitalists of the past knew, as do those of today, that any interference from the population in general will weaken profits and greatly diminish the possibility of growth.

Second, capitalism needs a form of government whereby citizens are given the right amount of liberty to allow for their movement and ability to grow as individuals, yet without allowing the masses in general to create enough capital and wealth to compete with those who are already wealthy; it is the population of the state that creates wealth for business. Without the people of the state involved in the economy to the fullest, not as competitors but participants and workers of every kind, it is impossible for capital to be generated. Thus you find the beginning of the contradiction between the traditional definition of democracy and the political system desired by the wealthy and powerful. In essence, it became necessary that a new meaning of democracy be defined.

Democracy and its principles of openness and equality provided everything the capitalists and industrialists of the time needed to start their economies, except, of course, for one thing: the basic tenet of the traditional definition of democracy with the individual as the source of power and sole beneficiary of progress and prosperity. This was the problem. The early capitalists and industrialists knew back then that if the profit generated by a capitalistic economy were to benefit *all* individuals and their well-being, there would be no incentive for the capitalist to extend effort or take risks in the economy.

Furthermore, as time progressed, it was realized that there would be no way that those

without privilege, wealth and property in these emerging industrialized nations would allow for their own exploitation for profit. What was needed was a system that could take the best of democracy and merge it with a political system that could still effectively guarantee political control for those who already ran these European states—the burgeoning bourgeoisie class, the aristocracy, and the monarchy that still ruled Europe.

An Echo and Shadow of the Past in the Present

So perhaps that young woman was right not to believe in Canadian parliamentary democracy. If only I had been able to explain to her what I now know, perhaps it might not have been an argument, but instead a debate or meaningful conversation. That said, perhaps I should have asked the question she might now ask, “So what makes parliamentarianism democratic?”

Maybe she already knew that Canadian parliamentary democracy still maintained a historically slavish relationship toward the influence of capitalism, that it was a structured form of government that only works as a top-down hierarchical institution, reminiscent of a time when unelected officials ran the county, the shadowy image of a monarch in a faraway land still hovering over everything, an influence still visible in the not-so-distant past.

It is no wonder then, that this woman who was empowering herself by going to university felt let down by parliamentary democracy in Canada; the problem with the system is not ideological, it is physical: her dissatisfaction and contempt a result of not being able to change problems revealed by her own intellect, her mind striving for equality and justice as she understood it.

In going to school and learning, she was changing the status quo of her life. When this reality is juxtaposed against what she sees as the status quo for the country, what became readily understandable was that achievements of the past were dispersals of power among certain institutions and individual bodies of authority throughout the legislative, executive and legal branches of the government of Canada, which, although indirectly accountable to the people of the state, are, in a sense, autonomous in nature.

From her perspective, the structure of these institutions allowed for a continued supremacy of power among an elite, along with a continued assurance of the political status quo, no matter who she voted to occupy the seats of parliament in Ottawa, the provincial legislature in Winnipeg, or the trustee for the school board in Transcona. Certainly all these positions of delegated power were available to her if she decided to become a politician herself, but if she is not willing to become a politician, or is unable to get herself appointed to a position of power on a board or council, these founding pillars of authority are designed to keep her in her place.

And upon closer examination, she can also see that this parliamentary democracy offers little in the way of accountability when the government is run like a large corporation. You may be elected to the board as the chairperson and you may decide that even though

your company is in the business of making radios, you would like to make automobiles. But, in the end, despite all your attempts to change the direction of the company, you will still be making radios. And all that will have happened is that you will be removed from your position and someone who is only interested in making radios will be elected.

What is *not* permitted is fundamental change. The opportunity for dynamic change is not allowed or tolerated. From that student's perspective of fulfillment, growth and prosperity were not given the opportunity to flourish within their own spheres of influence, all of which are central and fundamental to any true definition of democracy. This core difference is what separates life in the United States and Switzerland from life in Canada. She may experience political and economic liberty in a fundamentally different way in terms of both political and economic outcomes compared to those who live in America or Switzerland, and in her mind it is just as good, for it is better than none at all.

But in the end, all that has been accomplished is that when she hears the word *democracy* she thinks of the restraints, the corruption, the sleazy politician, the never-ending status quo. She, and many other young people like her, views democracy as something that really does not work.

Parliamentary democracy in Canada is so far from the historical definitions of democracy—as exemplified by classical Greece and the revolutionary doctrines and writing of the 17th and 18th centuries—that it leaves you completely wanting. Canadian democracy has poisoned the minds of the youth and the common people in general toward ideas like the emancipation of the individual. It has disenfranchised the youth to the point that they abandon the word and its principles completely. It forces many to search for other forms of government and organization seeking solutions to today's problems.

And to the youth of today, an undemocratic system can seem just as good as Canadian democracy. This belief that an undemocratic system is just as good as democracy is the little lie that Canadian parliamentary democracy fosters, encapsulated and distinctly visible as it is in the endless debate over the fate of the Canadian Senate. As seen continually in polling numbers, more believe in abolishing the senate than using it as a spring board for more democratic accountability or power; the people of Canada have succumbed to the false idea that the consolidation of more power in the hands of a few is better than expanding their democratic rights and opportunities.

In closing then, it must be asked how many outside of Canada can see the same incongruity around their desire for a truly democratic state and what actually exists in their country today? And with all that has been discovered, who could not agree with the disdain felt by that young woman in Winnipeg about the role democracy plays in a country like Canada?

This, then, is the second pillar in the foundation of the answer to our original question about the lack of interest in individual emancipation here in the West today. With this

insight it becomes possible to see that in Canada, as well as the countries that make up the European Union, parliamentary democracy actually infringes upon and limits the right of the individual to exist in relative liberty without some form of oppression.

CAUGHT IN A VICE: BETWEEN THE FIXED JAW OF CAPITALISM & THE SLIDING JAW OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

The Slow Asphyxiation in the Western Concept of Self in Canada

This will not be a great retelling of Canadian history, a chronicling of great political deeds, a presentation of great philosophical, intellectual and scientific achievements, or include the analysis of economic data. Rather, it will be a simple examination of a select few events and intellectual ideas, and their use by the systems of capitalism and parliamentary democracy to manipulate, control and influence the life of the individual in a Canadian context, beginning with the settling of Upper and Lower Canada, and ending in the 1990s.

For many, Canada is an unknown entity. If you were to travel in the United States, you would be hard-pressed to read any news about Canada in the local or national newspapers. If you were to watch television for a week, flipping through all the channels, you would not see any news anchor talking about Canada, no television programs discussing the culture, languages and people of the country to the North. This holds true even in border states like Michigan, Washington and North Dakota.

It also holds true in Europe. Certainly, the people there have heard of Canada and can offer up an opinion of what they think of Canadians in general: a polite people, easy to get along with and very friendly. But beyond that, unless you are an academic teaching Canadian history or a student studying at a European academic institution, a more detailed opinion of Canada and its role in the Western World would be hard to come by.

Hidden within this seemingly innocent, innocuous and incomplete definition of Canada lies a very troubling reality that most in the West are not aware of. If you were to look deeper into the history and contemporary societal structure of the Great White North, you would find a country that, in the 1990s, took the concept of mass society⁵⁰ to the edge of political madness.

This building of a mass society is one of the principle reasons why the emancipation of the individual, and in particular the empowerment of women, has taken a back seat to secondary and irrelevant questions of policy or progress here in Canada. This curtailing of the drive for more democratic power and liberty for the average person is directly attributable to a carefully planned, engineered, socially-coordinated and intellectually-based program that has at its roots the need to engineer the perfect citizen.

Due to our unique history—an unhindered capitalistic free market existing for over 150 years, a parliamentary democratic government that has remained in power without interruption for the same length of time, an unshakeable belief in statism,⁵¹ an enormous

⁵⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_society

⁵¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statism>

land mass⁵² (Canada being the second largest country in the world) and a relatively small population⁵³ congregated in 11 major cities scattered across this vast country—mass society can be seen at its zenith of influence today. Reinforcing this social construction in the “two-step flow”⁵⁴ of communication, today’s Canadian mass society is readily accepted by most and recognizable within all social strata.

Furthermore, through a full examination of the make-up of contemporary Canadian society and the reciprocity that is found between capitalism and parliamentary democracy, and its effective structural use in Canada, you can then see the beginnings of a template that the elite of Western Europe have been using in their drive to produce the prototypical European society after the demise of the Soviet Union.

In essence, Canada is the guiding framework for a new European Union populated by today’s ideal mass citizen, beginning with men and women who live in separate but equal worlds; children who are cultivated from birth without a fixed heritage, ancestry or religion; a state that exists independent from the past and at arm’s length from the present; the idea of an individual tethered to nothing but the forever-shifting fads of consumerism and ideology, creating a situation where the status quo is a never-ending fantasy of reality, and ending with men and women living on under their own unique names but without meaning, each enslaved to a system that provides no political or economic recourse to change their manufactured destiny.

If you look hard enough, you can see the devastating social consequences and damaging behavioural effects of this mass citizen everywhere. Who has not met a young woman who is unaware of her surroundings, the names and occupation of her neighbours forever hidden to her; living life only through the demands of her friends and the false expectations created by today’s mass media. The devastating effects of a world that consists of bouncing from one thing to the next without patience or forethought, living only on impulse, driven by a fear of commitment, estranged from her own family through the blind addiction of depression, drowning her emotions in the love of money, alcoholic binge-drinking and fashion magazines, each being the placebos of our time?

Or what of the docile young man uninterested in politics or the well-being of his fellow man, who sees military or public service as a valueless waste of time, and is skeptical of the rewards and benefits of intellectual stimulation; who finds himself an adversary to those who are different; afraid of spirituality, growing up and authority; confusing arrogance, comeuppance and rudeness with liberating thoughts and words; a video-gamer who lives only for the flicker of the television screen, releasing the rest of his nervous energy in risk-taking behaviour and jackass stunts.

This overarching influence of mass society, and this manufacture of an ideal mass citizen forms the third pillar of our answer to the question of what happened to individual emancipation. By examining the plight of the Canadian individual and how they are

⁵² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Canada

⁵³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Canada

⁵⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-step_flow_of_communication

forced to bend to the will of history through the building of capitalism and parliamentary democracy of a forever-growing bourgeois elite, it becomes possible to extrapolate these findings into a broader discussion that can encompass not only Canada, but the emerging concept of a European Union.

When describing the impact and consequences of these historical events upon the men and women who experienced them, it must be cautioned that they themselves must not be viewed through the prism of historicism,⁵⁵ a connection unbroken from the past, a progression of sorts toward some noble or utopian intellectual outcome of individual understanding and introspection of what it means to be human. People are connected to history, the individual remains a timeless entity. To help showcase this perspective, it is necessary to frame this debate through the two systems of power—capitalism and parliamentary democracy—each acting like bookends, or in this case the jaws of a vice, between which the men and women of Canada and Europe have been trapped for centuries now.

Through a thorough deconstruction of the external events that have, over time, attributed to Canada's appearance on the world stage, this discussion allows others to see how their own mass society has been constructed, influenced and manipulated by other societies and ideas—each country drawing upon its own history and intellectual pathway to create its own society of culture, tradition and meaning.

Furthermore, this process allows the reader to connect with the people who lived during this time, and creates not so much a historical context, but a broad definition of self that the people of the time experienced. However, when describing the intellectual definition of the individual or the concept of self with neither a link between the present nor the past, and always with an eye toward the future, it is only prudent to view the following representation of self based upon the past as one that is evidentiary and not necessarily evolutionary.

This dual track of separating and discerning the plight of the individual from the history of the nation allows you to realize their actual detachment to history, thereby creating a situation where you can then see that not all intellectual endeavours or definitions of self offer a sagacious knowledge of who we are or what we might want to be. And through the unbroken link between the two systems of power—capitalism and parliamentary democracy—you can then construct a set of facts, figures and events related to the past that presents us with a common reference point that can be understood today. Taken altogether, this creates the third pillar to our search for an answer regarding the emancipation of the individual.

⁵⁵ Popper, Karl. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. <http://www.inf.fu-berlin.de/lehre/WS06/pmo/eng/Popper-OpenSociety.pdf>

Mapping Out the Slow Asphyxiation of Self in Canada's Mass Society

Each country in the Western world produces its own mass society differently. In Canada, certain intellectual concepts that were developed elsewhere—coupled with a number of exterior historical events and intellectual undertakings that occurred during the 18th, 19th and early part of the 20th centuries—contributed to the foundation upon which Canada's contemporary mass society is produced. It is the institutions, political structures and economic infrastructure that have been cultivated over the years that shape the individual of today, not the personal histories of those who have lived.

It is said that we all come from somewhere. And that statement applies to those who call Canada home. As Europe found itself striving to define itself through culture, language and tradition, those who lived in Canada in the early part of the 19th century also partitioned Canada along similar lines.

Although the origins of the nation state can be traced as far back as the 16th century, it did not really take shape until the revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe and North America.⁵⁶ In European terms, the nation state was the logical outcome of European history. The French Revolution itself, perhaps more than anything else, played the catalyst to a new era of European geopolitical history. From the revolution, the idea of one people—directly linked to one another through one culture, one language and one history—formed, in essence, the modern nation state. From the example of the French, the rest of Continental Europe, and eventually the world, would follow.

The concept of the individual that was so central to the thinking brought forth after the American Revolution actually took a step back after the French revolution, the individual slowly slipping once again into the background. By identifying with his nationality, the individual was now connected to his neighbour, not in the same way to his or her family, but with a duty and responsibility that had not existed before, a social contract⁵⁷ that bonded the two together through community and association.

“I” forevermore became intractably linked with “we” and “us.”

In Canada, this need to be identified by your culture and language led to the partitioning of the country in the 18th century into Upper⁵⁸ and Lower Canada.⁵⁹ Unlike the American experiment with the 13 colonies, which were settled based on where immigrants in search of new beginnings came from, seeing themselves set on a different path from the rest, those within Canada remained firmly rooted in their home countries—two separate umbilical cords stretched from Canada to England and France, never broken.

The British controlled Upper Canada, a tract of land that today would encompass all of

⁵⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nation_state

⁵⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_contract

⁵⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Canada

⁵⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lower_Canada

the province of Ontario, and the Pays-d'en Haut.⁶⁰ Lower Canada, under the control of France, was a tract of land that would today consist of the southern portion of the province of Quebec and what is referred to as Labrador.

In 1848, Karl Marx and Joseph Engels published their Communist manifesto.⁶¹ This work more than any other severed the idea of the individual from the idea of self. It was impossible from that moment on to see oneself as an individual in the context of European, or more importantly, Canadian political thought.⁶²

With its emphasis on class struggle and the concept of “the worker” or “worker rights,” the Communist Manifesto offered the idea of the individual no refuge. Brought forth as an indictment and an answer to the tyranny that the Industrial Revolution⁶³ placed upon the individual of Europe, this work was also to lay the foundation for yet another splintering of the concept of the individual some 50 or so years later: the invention of “political thought” or ideology.

Although it would be 50 or more years before the impact of this intellectual work would be felt in Canada, the unique foundation that was forming throughout the British and French colony would serve as great incubator for the teachings of Marx. If the nation state created the notion that the individual could not live without a definition that included your neighbour, the Communist Manifesto further diluted the concept of self with its discussions of being a worker, with the destiny of your life being shared and shaped in equal measure by being born into a class of people with whom you shared everything. Little room was left to think about your own personal desires and wants.

Another exterior event that would eventually have a landmark impact upon Canadian society was the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859.⁶⁴ Man was once and for all thrown out of God's creation. This, in many respects, was the straw that broke the camel's back when discussing the idea of an individual living, in a philosophical context, free and with dignity.

Unlike the Protestant Reformation⁶⁵ or the English Reformation,⁶⁶ the publication of Darwin's work, with its central thesis of evolution, altered the very nature of how the individual was to look upon not only his or her ancestry, but also the very nature of existence. The great schism, not seen in either reformation process, was a complete break of the purpose and foundation of how men and women would conduct their lives.

This great schism was represented intellectually by the replacing of an ideal that was absolute in nature with one that would be universal, defined by man; if man could create

⁶⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pays_d%27en_Haut

⁶¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Communist_Manifesto

⁶² <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>

⁶³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_Revolution

⁶⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Origin_of_Species

⁶⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation

⁶⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Reformation

facts and figures to replace the absolute, the pinnacle of hierarchical thought was discredited. But more was sacrificed in this tearing away of the concept of the human race from the idea of God—it also began the downfall of the concept pivotal to the proper functioning of human society: the concept of truth.

Even though the science behind Darwin's theory is sound and irrefutable, the philosophy to which it speaks is fatally flawed. This new philosophical universalism replaced the idea of an absolute and cast the individual down an unknown path in 1859 without an intellectual compass or moral anchor, and began the process of collapsing the quest for truth.

Although the American Civil War was not fought on Canadian soil, it had a profound effect upon Canada in a number of ways. The firing on Fort Sumter⁶⁷ in South Carolina on April 12, 1861 by Confederate Forces of the Antebellum Southern United States⁶⁸ represented more than just a dispute between two disparate groups with opposing political and economic interests; it represented an all-out assault on the emancipation of the individual brought forth into the Western world during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The North adhered far more to the principles of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence than the South ever did. To understand this difference, all you have to do is look at the founding documents⁶⁹ and structure proposed by the Confederate States of America.⁷⁰ The idea of the individual was all but absent in the South, and non-existent when the issue of slavery is taken into account. What is even more interesting is that with war came another splintering in the definition of self within the minds of men and women in the Western world.

From the moment that first shot was fired in both American and Western intellectual circles, the individual would have to forfeit the core pillar that attached them to their past; a pillar that had evolved over a millennium in how we see ourselves; a definition that centred around the reflection you see every time you looked into a mirror...

It was during this period of time the individual was ripped away from their family.

In the American Civil War of 1861-1865, brother fought against brother, family against family. It all depended where you lived. For years, these tales of woe were ephemeral, told from memory, handed down through the generations as family history—an acknowledgment of the consequences of war on the North American continent. But in *The Divided Family in Civil War America*,⁷¹ these stories become reality with actual documentation and research showing the existence of such events.

For Canada, the American Civil War was the driving force that led Upper and Lower

⁶⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Fort_Sumter

⁶⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Southern_United_States

⁶⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederate_States_Constitution

⁷⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederate_States_of_America

⁷¹ Taylor, Amy Murrell. *The Divided Family in Civil War America*. UNC Press. 2009.

Canada to seek out nationhood with the other territories and jurisdictions of Rupert's Land. Northerners watched from afar and saw what a divided nation could do to itself, which had a great impact upon the drive for Canadian statehood. Canada became a confederation in 1867 and the first sitting of parliament commenced on November 6, of that year.

Another lasting impact of the American Civil War was the path each country would take in regard to the treatment of their respective native populations and other minorities found within their borders. Instead of assimilating and outright exterminating the native population that America had chosen, Canada offered a hand of peace and friendship to its First Nations peoples.

The final event of the 19th century that to this day continues to influence Canadian society is the development of ideology. It would be hard not to argue that the human being is born unto this world a *tabula rasa*.⁷² Throughout much of the 19th century, the individual was viewed as a slab of marble that had yet to take form, the hand of the master sculptor yet to make the first mark giving meaning, purpose, intent, function, understanding or direction. But by the middle of the 19th century, it was becoming readily apparent and discernible that “we” could possibly be represented by a single mold, doing away with the individual entirely; just create the perfect mold, with the right combination of values, principles, wants or desires, and pour your plaster. The human race slowly began defining itself, not in individual terms, but more like that collective “we” so handily crafted from the books of Marx and philosophers like Hegel and Nietzsche.

But how would this mold be created?

By the end of the American Civil War and with the oncoming of the 20th century, it became evident that this sculpted man, this new pliable marble Mona Lisa, this new individual, was seen as something requiring only *one* chiseled representation; it was too much work for each to be crafted in a unique way, too much money, too problematic in terms of control or governance.

However, if a masterfully sculpted individual could be created, put together from scratch without flaws—just in mannerism, form and thought—then all could model themselves upon this perfect being, creating with it the utopian world so desired: one slab of rock would do for all. This was mirrored by the outward reach of colonialism and empire building by the nations of Europe: the British Empire,⁷³ the Ottoman Empire,⁷⁴ the Russian Empire⁷⁵ and the German Empire.⁷⁶

Although the word *ideologue* was coined by Destutt de Tracy⁷⁷ in 1796, the term

⁷²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabula_rasa

⁷³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire

⁷⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire

⁷⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Empire

⁷⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Empire

⁷⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destutt_de_Tracy

ideology was not a major factor in the shaping of the definition of self until this outward expansion and conflict between empires began to take shape in Europe and North America.

Yet, despite warnings from many—“Nineteenth century social science abounds in warnings against the distorting influences of passion, political interest, nationalism, and class feeling and in appeals for self-purification”⁷⁸—this endless array of adventures revolving around the conquest of new lands,⁷⁹ and the never-ending expansion of the “empire”⁸⁰ was the foundation for ideology.

In *Ideology and Utopia*, Karl Mannheim⁸¹ tried to understand the origins of ideology and the need to obscure fact. Within a matter of a hundred years, the idea of an individual had gone from the seemingly endless to becoming a vassal without meaning, with nothing attached to it except what society dictated. “What was once regarded as the esoteric concern of a few intellectuals in a single country has become the common plight of modern man.”⁸²

Ideology was the final filling plaster for the mold that would represent the answers to individual life in Canada at the end of the 19th century: the grand narrative of individual emancipation was slowly ending with lies, falsehoods and half-truths.

Sir Wilfred Laurier said that the 20th century was to be Canada’s century.⁸³ And in many respects, he was right: capitalism thrived and what once was a small insignificant colony of the British Empire in the 19th century has grown today into one of the top 10 largest economies in the world. But, just as Canada contributes today to the image and definition of international politics, and the development of the mass citizen in Europe, it can be said that until the end of the Second World War, Canada, more than any other country in the West, was shaped by external events.

In both political and economic terms, the events of the 20th century had a greater impact upon Canada than Canada had on the world. These foreign developments and international events forging upon the nation of Canada its specific narrative—one formed by ideas and events that came to the shores of Newfoundland and British Columbia to combine with an already unique history to produce a society that would eventually form the model upon which the concept of the European Union would follow.

Somewhat paradoxically, in the early part of the 20th century where it was proclaimed by

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire

⁸⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Empire

⁸¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Mannheim

⁸² Wirth, Louis. “Preface” in *Ideology and Utopia*. Karl Mannheim. 1939. p.xiii.

⁸³ Abella, Irving. *The Canadian Labour Movement 1902-1960*. Canadian Historical Society Booklet No.28. 1975. p. 1.

the political and economic elite in England that the state of Canada had been born, and the wealthy were unshackled from their colonial chains and given the right, power and authority by the Queen and the English parliament to be master in their own house. The same could not be said of the common men and women born into Canadian society or the recent immigrants that were coming ashore in the thousands from the four corners of the world. For them, life was restricted from cradle to grave, a slow dwindling of dignity and self-worth was their future. From an intellectual standpoint, it was the beginning of Canada's mass society and an asphyxiation of the concept of self.

This grinding down in the concept of self—the replacing of “I think, therefore I am” with a “tabula rasa” unable to fend for yourself, incapable of offering anything concrete or substantive to society except cheap labour of a dollar a day,⁸⁴ a simple vassal and cat's paw of science and technology—was the perfect seed from which the collective needs and wants of the elite of Canadian society flourished.

The Great War of 1914-1918 laid bare the insignificance and contempt with which the commoner was viewed by the intellectual and political leaders of the West. The Great War revealed their true feelings and opinion of those who happened to be born without privilege, class or wealth. Conscripted and coerced by the millions into the armies of the West and mowed down in the hundreds of thousands by the machine guns—lungs pierced with mustard gas, bodies torn apart and disfigured by the barrage of artillery day and night—the individual was nothing more than cannon fodder. Of the 60 million soldiers mobilized to fight the war, millions would perish,⁸⁵ including 65,000 Canadians.⁸⁶

The war cleared the stage of many actors. The Russian Empire withdrew from the war in 1917, with the Bolshevik revolution fully underway.⁸⁷ The Ottoman Empire broke apart, with Turkey holding only a small portion of its territory after the armistice of Mudros in 1918.⁸⁸ The Austro-Hungarian Empire was defeated and wiped off the map with the final battle of Vittorio Veneto.⁸⁹ And the empire of Germany was crushed and humiliated.⁹⁰

Borders shrank, new countries emerged⁹¹ and the concept of parliamentary democracy, along with a more refined definition of a nation state, took an even greater foothold throughout Europe.⁹² Canada was said to have become a nation in the fields of France when it accomplished what none of the great Allied powers could: the taking of Vimy Ridge.⁹³ But the event that would affect Canada even more, and forge the foundation of Canada's future mass citizen, also came in 1917.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I

⁸⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I_casualties#British_colonies

⁸⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_Revolution

⁸⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armistice_of_Mudros

⁸⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Vittorio_Veneto

⁹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles

⁹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aftermath_of_World_War_I

⁹² Lane, Jan-Erik. *Constitutions and Political Theory*. 1996. p.71.

⁹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Vimy_Ridge

Even though the Russian Revolution began in 1917, the Bolsheviks and their ideas would find solidarity within the ranks of Western Canada's immigrant and worker population, inspiring the General Strike in Winnipeg of 1919.

For six weeks, the workers in Winnipeg stood together against the establishment, the Citizens Committee of One Thousand made up of prominent businessmen, professionals, government officials, clergymen⁹⁴ and others with interests that ran counter to the interests of the worker. Even though the strike was eventually broken—the leaders jailed and some even deported, the labour movement in Canada set back by at least two decades—it would forever be a pivot point in the relationship between the elite of Canadian society and the rest, creating with it the political and intellectual space within Canadian society for the ideas of Marx, unionism and collective right to take hold.

Another event not directly born of Canadian society but which had a great impact on the people of Canada was the women's suffragist movement.⁹⁵ Although begun in the 19th century and overtly prevalent in Europe and the United States, it was not until 1918 that they achieved their full goal of allowing women the right to vote in Canada, although some women in Ontario who owned property had the right to vote for the local school trustee since 1850.

Through the active campaigning of the National Council of Women of Canada, and the hard work of women like Lady Aberdeen, Augusta Stowe-Gullen,⁹⁶ and thousands of other dedicated volunteers and activists, Prime Minister Borden introduced a bill in the parliament of Canada in 1918 that would give the women of Canada the vote, except in Quebec where this universal right was unjustly withheld until 1940.

For many of the elite who had influence in the West, including Canada during the 1920s, it was thought that the progress of the world hinged upon competition and the dominance of the strongest nation states over the weakest.⁹⁷ Even though the Great War had wiped out many of the 19th century empires, it had not fully dismantled the capital markets or business connections that the elite had so masterfully crafted hand in hand with their empire building; products and money could still be exchanged in global trade to every corner of the world.

It was through this great need to outdo other nations that the economies of the world were allowed to grow and merge. As stated earlier, capitalism is directly related to the development of the ideas of parliamentarianism, the nation state and nationalism. Upon these coattails rode the future of every man, woman and child in the early part of the 20th century. If you can understand the development of the nation state within the European context in the 18th and 19th centuries, then you can understand how the idea of capitalism

⁹⁴ Abella, Irving. *The Canadian Labour Movement 1902-1960*. Canadian Historical Society Booklet No.28. 1975. p. 12.

⁹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women's_suffrage

⁹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Council_of_Women_of_Canada

⁹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Darwinism

matured over the years into the 20th century's greater system of a free market economy.⁹⁸ As with the inherent flaws of empire building in creating unstable political environments and governments, unregulated capitalism too was susceptible to volatility. It was this atmosphere of weak regulation and control that eventually led to the collapse of the futures market in Chicago and the stock market crash of 1929.⁹⁹

The Great Depression was the result of the world's first failed attempt at a global economy. With the stock market collapse on Wall Street and eventual collapse of all individual economies in Europe through the destabilization of the gold standard,¹⁰⁰ this great economic collapse of 1929 hit Canada hard.

From hundreds of thousands being on relief and the overcrowded work camps in the Canadian wilderness to the mass migration of people in the rural areas of Western Canada to the cities, Canadian society was once again transformed by exterior events. And again, just as the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia had a lasting impression on Canadian society, the same could be said about the creation of the Committee for Industrial Organization in America,¹⁰¹ and the passing of the *Wagner Act* in 1935.¹⁰²

In many respects, these two events that transformed American labour would have an even greater impact here in Canada. In 1937, the workers of the General Motors plant went on strike and asked the Canadian CIO for assistance.¹⁰³ Yet, despite little assistance from the Canadian CIO, the implementation of union-busting techniques by business, and political interference and power from the premier of Ontario himself, the workers persevered and won. This event alone would crystallize the union movement in Canada, allowing it to eventually unionize workers in every province, and in almost every industry and sector in the country.¹⁰⁴

The culmination of this momentum for the labour movement came to a head when Ottawa was forced to pass Order in Council P.1003 in 1943. Modeled after the *Wagner Act* of 1935, it established a government body of authority that would from that day forward enforce collective bargaining while mandating union recognition, creating with it a mechanism and an apparatus that could correct and investigate unfair labour practices.¹⁰⁵

Even though these new rights were a necessary part of the evolutionary process that the Canadian narrative desperately needed—offering the working men and women of Canada the opportunity to work in a safe environment with fair working hours, a living wage or

⁹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_economy

⁹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wall_Street_Crash_of_1929

¹⁰⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gold_standard

¹⁰¹ Abella, Irving. *The Canadian Labour Movement 1902-1960*. Canadian Historical Society Booklet No.28. 1975. p. 18.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* p. 22.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 19.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 19.

salary and a future in which it would be possible to retire in dignity—this union moment also created with it a strong voice within the Canadian political and intellectual establishment.

Using tactics learned on the picket line and union halls, this movement broadened its influence in terms of political clout, favouring socialism and the idea of collective rights at the expense of the concept of the individual and self. This environment eventually led to a situation where such ideas have an overarching influence upon government policy and programming that exists in Canada to this very day.

In the 1940s, the final nail in the coffin was pounded into place over the idea of individual emancipation; once again the individual of the Western world was thrown to the wolves of war: millions of people were killed and mutilated¹⁰⁶ and many more millions were left homeless and sick. The ultimate carnage and disregard for the individual and the ideas of the Enlightenment were driven home with the fire-bombing of Dresden,¹⁰⁷ Nazi Concentration camps¹⁰⁸ and the destruction of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic weapons.¹⁰⁹

By 1945, some 200 years after writers like Adam Smith¹¹⁰ and Jeremy Bentham¹¹¹ brought forth work extolling the virtues and importance of individualism¹¹²—a concept that had blown so powerfully and forcefully into the Western world with the promise of freedom, economic prosperity and individual fulfillment—all had been crushed in Europe. For those living in Canada, the remaining flicker of light for the idea of individual emancipation slowly succumbed and was slowly replaced by a belief in socialism, unionism and the supremacy of collective rights over the needs and desires of the individual. And no greater depiction of this dire situation for the individual existed in the Canadian context than the relationship between the Canadian government and the First Nations peoples. Many natives left their reserves to fight for King and country, and many did not return. As a reward for their hard work in freeing the Western world from tyranny, those who did return to their reserves had their children taken from them and placed in residential schools.¹¹³ Thus, the master narrative of the emancipation of the individual was laid waste.

¹⁰⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties

¹⁰⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombing_of_Dresden_in_World_War_II

¹⁰⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_concentration_camps

¹⁰⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atomic_bombings_of_Hiroshima_and_Nagasaki

¹¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Smith

¹¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeremy_Bentham

¹¹² <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Atomized+individualism>

¹¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Indian_residential_school_system

The Manufacturing of Canada's Contemporary Mass Citizen

In the 1990s, Canada was a country that celebrated the masses at the expense of the individual. Because of the influence of these various events of the past two centuries, coupled with the continued entrenchment of capitalism and parliamentary democracy, the individual has been pressured to conform to Canadian society instead of being allowed to grow and develop on their own.

From an outward perspective, Canadian society is not unlike most other Western European nations. Millions of people use the subway and mass transportation in their daily lives; most people receive their mail through a nationalized postal service; people buy their food from a mass distribution system of grocery stores; and their children are educated in a mass public education system.

However, in Canada, this mass infrastructure does not stop there. The telecommunications systems of the country are run by the government; water resources are under the purview of provincial and federal governments; the production of electricity and power is controlled by the provincial governments in Canada. Mass society also influences the healthcare industry through government control; Western Canadian agriculture is influenced by the concept of mass society through the Canadian Wheat Board, and most of the food production in Canada is under the control of marketing boards. The hand of the collective is even found in higher education—almost all universities in Canada are funded through public funds instead of being privately resourced.

With so much infrastructure under the control of mass society, the politics of the Canadian state conforms to those ideals and concepts that continually reinforce and recreate the environment for mass society itself. Today, the Canadian political narrative is dominated by ideas associated with social liberalism, socialism, collective rights and multiculturalism.¹¹⁴

To understand the pressure that has been placed upon Generation X to conform to this mass-produced Canadian society, all you need do is look at the Canadian constitution. It says that Canada is a country that believes and enforces, through various coercive abilities of social control, that the state stands for “peace, security and good government.” Contrast that with the American belief in “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” and you can understand how Canada is building the ideal mass citizen for the 21st century.

Everywhere you turn in Canada, you are bombarded with this concept of the ideal mass citizen. From the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the state-run radio and television station, to the films that the National Film Board funds and produces; from Canadian television shows regulated by Canadian content rules to the advertising agencies that cannot survive without the millions in advertising revenue from the government, and the few remaining magazine and book publishers in the country, the individual living in Canada is constantly reminded of what the government thinks it means to be Canadian.

¹¹⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism>

No ethnic culture has come under more specific pressure to conform to the construction of this ideal Canadian as the First Nations peoples of Canada. From enduring years of humiliation and a loss of dignity due to the forced internment in the residential school system,¹¹⁵ to the overt and outright policies of assimilation that originated in the Government of Canada's Department of Indian Affairs that uses grants, project funding and the threat of their withdrawal to reward "good Indians" and punish the recalcitrant in defense of a classic clientist welfare state agenda,¹¹⁶ the First Nations people have had to endure the full force and destructive consequences of this redefinition of self.

Ensuring that this carefully crafted message is not undercut or modified, the Canadian government is, in many respects, the sole provider of funds to the cultural industries¹¹⁷ that shape the intellectual and artistic narrative of the country. From the federally funded organizations like the Canada Council or Telefilm Canada to provincial arts boards and various municipal funding agencies around the country, all arts organizations are dependent upon government money.

Without this government funding most would not exist.

By dissecting and deconstructing this definition of a mass citizen, you can see a blurring of the various demographic lines within Canadian society. In the research of Max Weber we see that Canadian society is void of a positive privileged property class on the top to the negatively privileged property class on the bottom.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the influence of status groups and political parties is purposefully downplayed; wealth and position¹¹⁹ take a back seat to the ideal of many cultures joined in one outcome and one destiny. And even if they are never seen in the grand narrative of Canada's mass citizen; many are led to believe that those with mental or physical disabilities neither live in poverty nor mental anguish.

This manufactured narrative of Canada's mass citizen is driven by the two-step flow of communication and disbursement. All aspects of the media are supported by the academic and cultural communities continual reinforcement of this messaging with a revolving door of experts from the morning paper to the television interview in the afternoon. Editorial pages are filled with the opinions of those with *accepted* professional credentials or experience; columnists are hired for their ability to toe the paper's political line—some readily admitting in private that certain ideas would never find their way into their column for fear of losing their jobs. In the main daily newspapers found in Canada's largest cities, book reviewers pronounce opinion freely upon those writers associated with mainstream publishers, Random House or Harper Collins and the like; magazines print articles in the hundreds by leading writers known only within their tight-knit elite cliques.

¹¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Indian_residential_school_system

¹¹⁶ http://policymagazine.ca/pdf/articles/Policy_Robin_V_Sears.pdf

¹¹⁷ <http://www.ic.gc.ca/cis-sic/cis-sic.nsf/IDE/cis-sic51defe.html>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.oaklandcc.edu/assessment/XML%20and%20Documents/General-Education/Critical-Thinking/rubric/Student%20Artifact%208A.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Where is the opinion of the common Canadian discussed? Where are the issues and concerns of the millions of Canadian youth reflected and debated? What does that female bus driver think? Or the nurse with the 12-hour shift? Where does that farmer in Saskatchewan see his views represented? And what about that fisherman in Digby, Nova Scotia? Where can she see her concerns addressed? What of that truck driver who just delivered fresh vegetables from California to your grocery store? They must look to those letters to the editor to air their opinions, a life's worth of meaning and understanding that must be summed up in less than 250 words. And if they have the time, they can sit on the phone for half an hour, hoping they don't switch subjects or get hung up on while trying to participate in talk radio.

Who ever asks the opinion of high school seniors who can vote before receiving a diploma? Or university students working two-part time jobs to finish their B.A.? In the 1990s, they are treated with 19th century Victorian manners: better seen than heard.

Supporting this two-step flow of communication and legitimacy is the academic community, wherein Canada creates the experts needed to push its mass citizen into the future. Canada's mass citizen is easily recognizable in the political and social science departments, which are dominated by published works that have been filtered through the lens of identity politics—a preference for new, timeless, ungrounded theory replacing the reason and logic of philosophy; ideological purity replacing open debate. To maintain the discipline and rigid demands of today's definition of mass citizen, an enforced attitude or environment is wielded by the heavy hand of political correctness.

It is in the cultural industries where the two-step flow reinforces and refines the academic foundation of what it means to be a mass citizen. It is here that traditional narratives of storytelling like history are replaced by foundational concepts like equality and representation. Ensuring that this definition is maintained, filmmakers must first traverse a minefield of “government requirements” in their scripts if they are to qualify for their tax credit.

Throughout the film industry, documentary projects and fictional films reinforce the perspective that themes of race, colour and creed must revolve around issues of equality and representation when contributing to this manufactured narrative. All minorities are viewed and treated without distinction; all visually present on the screen, but still ill-defined.

This approach hinders the telling of real and persistent social problems and strife in Canadian communities; natives in the hundreds of thousands who live on rural reserves in third world squalour are somehow forgotten. And the fact that immigrants congregate within their own exclusive ethnic enclaves within the urban setting, setting up permanent barriers between themselves and other Canadians, goes unacknowledged by the concept of a mass citizen.

On Canadian television, the viewer is offered a picture of themselves from coast to coast that is unisex, colourless, and agnostic. Moreover, this mass citizen, the “we” of society

are all progressive-thinking and only interested in money, home ownership, renovating, environmentalism, physical fitness and shopping.

Even writers who focus on literature and magazine stories reinforce the idea of this mass citizen, the printed word reflecting a society that bends more toward ideology and theory than reality. You would normally expect to find fiction filled with empty distinctions, themes and hollowed out characters, but in Canada this is the state in which non-fiction finds itself, as the mass citizen is unsuccessfully defined by words like *diversity* and *inclusivity*.

Although many would say this utopian society is fine, and that the ideal mass Canadian citizen is a far superior person both morally and ethically than what you may encounter in America, Asia and Africa, it is not without its consequences.

This two-step flow has poisoned the political atmosphere, creating a stale environment where new ideas and new ways of thinking are seen as antithetical to the Canadian state and today's mass citizen. Up until 1993 and the success of the Reform party of Canada¹²⁰, Canadians have been able to choose between three dominant federal political parties that are, for any other purpose, identical in their approach to Canadian social and economic policy—all being progressive, all believing to some extent in the idea of full employment, overt intervention by the state in economic activity, and wealth redistribution.

For the New Democratic Party, the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives, issues and policy revolve around the need to maintain the status quo at any price. In more specific terms, mass society has throttled political debate in this country to the point of making parliament useless—all political problems are funneled through a process that looks not to address future needs or possible solutions, but one that can create a new methodology.

Even political activism, on either end of the political spectrum, has become somewhat surreal in this artificial environment. Endless campaigns over pointless ideological differences dominate the Canadian landscape. Strikes have become political theatre for the Left, with the consequences of job action landing harder on the striking worker than on the company: a sudden divorce for married couples, a lost job for those who have to find other work to support their families, and even bankruptcy. All for nothing. Most striking workers settle in the end for the offer that was presented before the strike began,¹²¹ and all the while the company maintains its profit by filling the striking positions with management or temporary workers.

The willing acceptance of the Canadian people to bow down to the demands of this mass citizen has morphed political rallies into nothing more than information drives where niche issues consume energy and interest. From the issue of environmentalism—we are constantly bombarded with the civic virtues of reduce, reuse and recycling—to the need

¹²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Party_of_Canada#1993_election

¹²¹ http://www.themilitant.com/1997/6146/6146_1.html

to end the seal hunt off the east coast of Newfoundland; from child poverty to the issue of homelessness, each is presented as political activism without connection to past historical events, offering little in the way of political clarity without ideological interference. The mass citizen's intelligence is insulted further by endless government and non-governmental public service announcements that extol the virtues of unionism in Canadian government, the benefits of living a healthy life according to the Canadian health index, or the importance of a clean environment, etc.

When looking specifically at the role of women in society, this treatment of gender without distinction in the overall message found within a Canadian context, has undercut the energy, direction and momentum of the women's movement that had such great influence in building Canadian society over the last 70 years. Even though a slight bias towards women is prevalent in government programming, the drive for expanded women's rights has slowed and has become pigeon-holed into traditional areas of interest like reproductive rights and family law.

Even more disturbing, the underlying drive for *freedom* that was once at the core of the movement for the emancipation of women has been hijacked by feminist theories in Canada that are more concerned with issues of community, ideology and equity.¹²² Today, women activists are consumed with issues like the socialist drive for equity within the nation's educational system, or the idea of numerical equality within government circles through the use of affirmative action programs like employment equity,¹²³ where numerical realism in the general population must be mirrored in the workforce.

Where once a drive for more power and greater freedom was the central issue for women, emancipation has now become a movement mired in the analysis of statistics and economic theory, and wound-up in ideology. Taken altogether, this drive for the ideal mass citizen has created for Canadian women a new feminine mystique.¹²⁴

As the World Turns, the Jaws of the Vice Slowly Close

The young people who live in Canada today do so without any real alternative to the insidious nature that lurks just below the surface of this quest to create this ideal citizen of the 21st century. Unlike the mass citizen that exists across the Atlantic Ocean in Europe, where you are confronted by a completely insulated environment of communication within nations themselves—barriers of language, custom and culture creating visible borders impregnable to a larger message from Europe itself—there does exist in Canada the possibility of escaping into American culture, entertainment and tradition.

If you are strong and determined enough, it is possible to partially block out the messaging and content that forms the foundation of this mass citizen by watching only

¹²² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equity>

¹²³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment_equity_\(Canada\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment_equity_(Canada))

¹²⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Feminine_Mystique

American television, reading American magazines or immersing oneself only in those titles that sit atop the New York Times bestsellers list. But this illusion is quickly lost and dismantled when you leave the confines of your home and try to build a *normal* Canadian life. From the moment you step forth from your door, it becomes readily apparent that the only two tools capable of making a real change in your life—money and political power—are unavailable for the majority of Canadians.

Social mobility, determined by economic opportunity and the ability to create and generate wealth for yourself, is severely restricted and constrained in Canada, limiting you to the level that you were born to. Unlike the capitalism that existed in the middle part of this century when millions of Canadians (including my own grandparents) were able to pay down their mortgage, put some money in the bank and retire in dignity with a pension (with the help of a union), those living today are confronted by an economic model called the *free market*¹²⁵ that offers little in terms of the economic opportunity and progress that earlier Canadians experienced.

If you were born without wealth and are unable to make the jump into entrepreneurship, today's free market capitalism offers nothing but a never-ending cycle wherein your life is spent marking time between being a student, a worker or living in the unemployment line—a slow, grinding process that offers little in return for years of labour. And with most of the youth today saddled with tremendous amounts of debt from student loans, credit cards, home mortgages and car loans, this path of life offers little possibility of financial freedom as one tries to save for retirement.

Even more troubling is the fact that the amount of money *anyone* can reasonably make over a lifetime is limited due to an overly aggressive progressive tax system that is burdensome to the middle class, confiscating as it does the majority of overtime and bonuses payouts. In Canada, when the money and lines of credit run out, so too does liberty.

From a political standpoint, parliamentary democracy and the choices of candidates and political parties it offers Canadians often act in a negative fashion, more a hurdle in the race for expanded freedoms like a free-thinking society, greater tolerance of speech you do not endorse, or an effective, neutral, governing authority. For all intents and purposes, today's youth are relatively powerless in terms of political influence over public policy at any level of government. When your vote is cast and there is not another election on the horizon for the next five years, democracy also runs out in Canada.

Many writers, who have criticized the problems and inequality found within the ideas of capitalism, the free market or democracy have often framed the debate around complex theories dealing with hierarchy, plutocracy,¹²⁶ patriarchy,¹²⁷ or monopolies, focusing on wealthy industrialists who are able to influence the democratic process in their favour.

¹²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_market

¹²⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plutocracy>

¹²⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy>

Left out from their research and writings is the impact that these systems have had on the individual themselves, and on the concept of self.

From this macro perspective, you can see how these barriers throughout the political, economic and social structures support an oppressive state narrative that reinforces the status quo and undermines the well-being of the individual in Canada. Reinforced by the two-step flow of communication and one-way, top down waterfall of legitimacy, influence and social control, over time, this tidal wave of messaging creates an environment that continually undermines the unique nature you were born with. From the moment you enter the world to the moment you take your last breath, the self—that piece of ourselves that causes us to smile, that makes us want to create works of art, that tells us what we want from life—is continuously under attack and eventually eroded away.

In essence, parliamentary democracy and free market capitalism, acting together, bounce Canada's mass citizen between a pursuit of politics that demands the maintenance of the status quo and a need to make money, two main foundational conduits used to distribute the social engineering behind the creation of Canada's mass citizen. Parliamentary democracy funnels the false narrative created by ideology throughout every aspect and corner of society, while capitalism forces the majority of those born into this world without meaningful amounts of wealth to start from a negative position of power. Taken together, this creates a Canadian social atmosphere where the individual is not wanted.

This duality of soft oppression and tyranny found in free market capitalism and parliamentary democracy are at the core of a much larger debate about the progress of Western civilization and its internal construction. In many respects, these systems maintain the primitive and collective structure that constrained us when we were a nomad race of beings and hunter-gatherers, where individuals were not tolerated, and the direction of the tribe or clan was determined by a very select few.

What this argument shows is that the debate about the direction of society is really and truly all about our overall arc of evolution or progress. Do we continue to embrace and function in a primitive society run by collective wants, needs and desires? Or do we continue our march forward with the individual at the centre of our modern society?¹²⁸ I fear I will forever be Mass Man.

¹²⁸ <http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2012/10/05/eric-michael-johnson-ayn-rand-vs-the-pygmyies/>

DEMOCRACY'S RETREAT: FROM A NEW EUROPEAN ORDER TO THE SUBTERFUGE OF POLITICAL REFORM IN AMERICA

Political and Economic Consolidation of the Mid- to Late-20th Century

At the end of the Second World War, Europe promised the world and its own people that things would be different. For those who survived this conflagration, it was thought that the emancipation of the individual would once again take centre stage, rising from the ashes of the conflict, and that the structure of the nation state in Europe would change—the idea of prosperity for all would take on more than just an economic definition, and politics would take on a new meaning of openness and inclusion. Cooperation and transparency would no longer simply be words found in a dictionary. In every decision that the state involved itself in, people would have a say also—from how their countries would be run to the direction that Europe would take in the coming years, and economically, people and their needs would be once and for all be placed before profit.

It was thought that the wealthy and political elite understood all too well the mistakes of the past that led to this catastrophe and would never let it happen again; the price was just too high in terms of the human and material cost to the world. The words “never again” were said to be the guiding principle: never again would the people of the West suffer through the consequences of an economic depression; never again would war be waged on that scale, and the violence and crimes against humanity witnessed in the first half of the 20th century would forever be excluded from any future European narrative.

Yet, despite the fact that post-war Western Europe was under heavy American influence in 1945, many countries that had just been liberated from Nazi rule held no real reverence for, or interest in, adopting American-style democracy. Nor did they look to the stable direct democracy model of government that Switzerland offered. Instead, many nations returned to the recent past for structure and stability.

How quickly the past is forgotten, the carnage and destruction wrought on the world by the European attitude best described as “others know best,” was directly contributable to the war and the depression they had just experienced. But without hesitation, this outward contempt for the lower classes—expressed with the snobbery of conceit fostered by the opinion that a certain segment of the population was born to rule and everyone would suffer if the common man rudely shouldered his way to the front¹²⁹—continued to permeate like a toxin throughout the ruling class of the states that had just been liberated.

In France, the Fourth Republic¹³⁰ was built around a constitution that largely mirrored the state in the shadow of the Third Republic¹³¹ that existed before the war. In Italy, parliamentary government returned and was immediately embroiled in party politics, a state where communism and the Communist Party found an excellent breeding ground in

¹²⁹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/11/26/abraham-lincoln-and-the-costs-of-inequality/?hpid=z3>

¹³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Fourth_Republic

¹³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Third_Republic

the rubble of Mussolini's fascism. In the Netherlands, the queen returned from exile and the parliament that was in place prior to the war in 1940 was reconvened. In Sweden, a country that survived the war relatively unscathed, parliament remained intact and was overseen at less than arm's length by the monarchy.¹³² Denmark, after liberation by British forces, maintained a parliament and the retention of monarch Christian X.¹³³ Even occupied Germany returned to the path of social liberalism and parliamentary democracy by 1950 with the creation of a provisional government set up in Bonn, West Germany by the Allies.¹³⁴ Thus, it was not long before the old was new once again, with democracy defined as nothing more than the circulation of the elite¹³⁵ and the liberated people soon felt the old yoke of 19th century parliamentarianism return.

In other parts of Europe, fascism still reigned. Spain, a country that remained neutral in the war, was ruled by the iron fist of dictator General Franco, with the tacit approval of the Bourbon royal family.¹³⁶ Portugal remained firmly under the control of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, and Greece—a country occupied in World War II—found itself fighting a civil war against the tyranny of communism in the form of the Democratic Army of Greece.¹³⁷ East Germany and Eastern Europe were under the control of the Soviets, the possibility of limited democracy or universally protected human rights still years away.

But despite this fractious puzzle of political systems, as the nations of Western Europe slowly rebuilt and the post-war years accumulated, it was not long before other structures of power and influence began to take shape. 19th century social liberalism was redefined and broadened in definition and substance, becoming the 20th century social democracy¹³⁸ in Europe. But in so doing, the emancipation of the individual was once again muscled out of academic and political circles.

By the mid 1950s, Trente Glorieuses¹³⁹ was fully under way not only in France, but throughout Europe, and social democracy was showing itself to be the preferred political choice of the elite of Europe from Scandinavia to Germany—even taking hold in the United Kingdom. From this stable and recovering European atmosphere, well-regulated systems of influence and control began to emerge, not only in specific European countries, but also as a larger drive among intellectuals and academics to define Europe itself. It was possible to begin to see that the lessons of history had begun to produce within the elite of Europe in the 1950s a set of reforms that would be two-fold in nature.

On the one hand, the possibility that the parliamentary democracies of Europe would become politically unstable in terms of social unrest had to be curtailed or removed as a possible outcome of the election cycle; political extremism, although only espoused by a

¹³² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustaf_V_of_Sweden

¹³³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_X_of_Denmark

¹³⁴ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Germany_\(1945%E2%80%931990\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Germany_(1945%E2%80%931990))

¹³⁵ <http://www.princeton.edu/~jmueller/HEI-ITA-Thought-JWMueller-22Sept2008-pdf.pdf/p.2>

¹³⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Bourbon

¹³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Civil_War

¹³⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_democracy

¹³⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trente_Glorieuses

small minority of any population, still threatened the possibility of turmoil should the right conditions prevail and the extremists win power.

On the other hand, it was acknowledged that the folly and haphazard manner in which the economies of Europe had been managed between the First and Second World Wars showed the need for greater regulation and cooperation between states. It also would be necessary to close the gap between the “haves” and “have-nots” in the hope of making them less susceptible to rejecting mainstream politics in favour of more extremist views.

It was along this line of thinking the architects of the post-war era thought it prudent to build. And by mid-century, you could see the remnants of what existed of the three forms of legal jurisprudence: British Common Law,¹⁴⁰ the French Civil Code,¹⁴¹ and the American system of Constitutional Law¹⁴² merging into a single and comprehensible legal system—a form of international law¹⁴³ that would exist independent of any one sovereign nation.

This legal foundation served as the template for the economic foundation that was laid down while the Allied leaders decided how post-war Europe was to be governed. As the leaders of the various nations of Western Europe thought through political and social problems, the business elite also sought to set down the framework for the economy of post-war Europe. Much of this work was done at a conference held in Bretton Woods¹⁴⁴ in the United States, where the powerful and influential of the financial world—many of whom bankrolled the war effort for the Allies—sat down to discuss their plans for economic cooperation using the free market system as their base. The key institutions established through this meeting were the International Monetary Fund¹⁴⁵ and the World Bank.¹⁴⁶ These institutions would work within the new international system of jurisprudence and form the legal foundation for a global system of corporate law and the emerging world of international investment law.

Through these institutions, it would be possible to stabilize the fragile European economy while at the same time providing massive loans on a scale never before seen to governments willing to rebuild their economies to the liking of the industrialists and capitalists who dominated the existing free market economies of the world.

This continent-wide consolidation of political and economic power from the end of the Second World War throughout the latter half of the 20th century has quietly replaced the framework or power structure that existed within the sovereign European nation states before the Second World War with a framework of power and influence found in various existential bodies of authority.

¹⁴⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_law

¹⁴¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleonic_Code

¹⁴² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_constitutional_law

¹⁴³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_law

¹⁴⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bretton_Woods_system

¹⁴⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Monetary_Fund

¹⁴⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Bank

Even in America during this timeframe, a consolidation and erosion of national sovereignty occurred. Certainly not to the degree and scope of what happened in Europe, but there has been a marked consolidation of power in North America in the name of emancipation, to expand “individual rights” and “democratic reform.” With enthusiasm and cries of “Power to the people!” the representatives and elite of the Western world have created laws and new institutions of power that amount to nothing more than window dressing, a contemporary “opiate for the masses,” that once again shuts out the individual in terms of greater political power, personal meaning, and economic prosperity or choice.

To better understand the ramifications and the developments that led to this unprecedented consolidation of political and economic power in Europe and America since 1945, the forth pillar of the foundation to our question will examine in greater detail the lack of prudence in this unprecedented merging of power. Such is the scope of this consolidation that it will be necessary to look at specific regions individually to explain in detail the detrimental impact it has had upon the individual of the Western world, revealing for all what has been lost.

Continental Europe

Of any region within the Western world, nowhere was the result of consolidation of political and economic power more acute than on the continent. Yet to many who inhabit Western Europe, much of what has happened has been accomplished without the input of the millions of people who are affected by such reforms. Further underlying this most disturbing shift in the structure of power is the fact that no sooner had the last remaining parliaments that were bound to a constitutional monarchy in Western Europe extricated from the influence of a king or queen, allowing the parliament of the state to reign supreme, than the elite begin rebuilding the past.

Europe is once again on the threshold of an era not seen since the rule of the Holy Roman Empire and the aristocracy. This ever-growing institution known as the European State or the European Union,¹⁴⁷ as it is more commonly referred to, is replacing the sovereignty that once existed within the parliaments of the individual states of Europe into one federal state, in which accountability and the right of the individual to direct the state has all but vanished.

The consolidation of power on the continent did not happen overnight. The process of consolidating the power of the individual nation states of Europe has been a painstakingly slow process. Most, if not all, of the changes that have occurred in Western Europe over the years have been achieved through the use of treaties and negotiated regulations through appointed officials who have little or no accountability to the public.

But make no mistake, an empire where the past structures of power long thought dormant will have influence once again, creating a place where barons and baronesses will find

¹⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union

employment, a world where they will shower accolades and hollow platitudes upon themselves for the organizations they create and run.

This idea of a European Union is one that has long been on the mind of many Europeans in the latter half of this century. After enduring two world wars, it was the express opinion of many that some solution would have to be found in order to establish a certain amount of stability that could also guarantee economic prosperity. Thus initiatives were begun in the hopes of creating an institution that could, in one broad stroke, replace the failings that the parliamentary democracy form of government had shown itself prone to.

Although representative democratic states were designed with a great many checks and balances to maintain a certain degree of stability, the Nazi episode in Germany during the 1930s and 1940s proved to many that there would have to be something that could replace the power structure of the state in such a way that the scourge of fascism, war and the resulting political and economic upheaval of the Second World War could be avoided in the future. It was through this need for a new structure that the initial step to a new federal union on the continent began.

But the emergence of a unified federal state has had neither public input nor public design. Although elected representatives of the major powers of Europe were involved in the creation of this new state structure, the extent of that involvement was never intended for the purpose of allowing greater political and economic freedom for the majority of the population. Through a series of treaties signed and ratified among the powers of Western Europe, the consolidation of economic and political power of individual nation states into one federal state has been achieved.

The beginning of the European Union could be described as suspect at best: a simple treaty between two European bureaucrats (Jean Monnet¹⁴⁸ and Robert Schuman¹⁴⁹) over the rights of coal to form the European Coal and Steel Community¹⁵⁰ was key to the foundation of today's European Union. It was instrumental not only because it was not driven by any real political reform, but because it was designed simply in economic terms and negotiated without any public input, which, in all respects, has been the driving force behind the European federal state.

From there came the Treaty of Rome on March 25, 1957,¹⁵¹ in which the governments of West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, or "The Six," as they are known, established the European Economic Community (EEC), the forerunner to today's EU. That same day, the treaty to establish Euratom¹⁵² was signed by The Six as well. This treaty was designed to harness and consolidate the nuclear programs of The Six into one manageable organization that could utilize the emerging energy source of nuclear power.

¹⁴⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Monnet

¹⁴⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Schuman

¹⁵⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Coal_and_Steel_Community

¹⁵¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Rome

¹⁵² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Atomic_Energy_Community

The development of these treaties began to forge new political and economic institutions outside the boundaries of these European nation states. With these new treaties came new laws and regulations that were enforceable, not through any legislature of the continent, but through tribunals outside the realm of public accountability.

With the success of the original treaties, it was not long before other treaties based upon this same framework emerged and began to take a foothold within Western Europe. The launching both of the common market¹⁵³ and agricultural policy¹⁵⁴ meant the removal of tariffs between the member countries within a 10-year period. Although this was an implicit deal between industry and agriculture, mainly in France and Germany, the impact of such an agreement was felt across Europe.

Next was the *Single European Act* (SEA),¹⁵⁵ which laid the groundwork for the next and final step that all but ensured the authority and legitimacy of the new federal state and its position of authority over any representative democracy. In essence, it created a single currency and a single common market, free of tariffs and other known barriers upon which the free exchange of goods and services among the nations of Western Europe would ultimately be based.

Then the Maastricht Treaty¹⁵⁶ was signed in 1992, advocating monetary and economic union and the establishment of a Central European Bank in Frankfurt, Germany—coupled with the eventual launch of the euro—a new level of government and power in Europe, neither accessible to the people of Western Europe nor one that even remotely resembles the principles and ideals that any form of democracy or representative democracy espouses, is set to appear on the world stage.

These major treaties and the many laws, regulations and rules that accompany them, form the basis of a new constitution of Europe, enforceable by the new European Court of Justice¹⁵⁷ that sits in Luxembourg. With 13 judges appointed from the various nation states that make up the European Union, it enforces and applies this new constitution within Europe, usurping any and all legislation that is in conflict with the decisions passed by the new federal state of Europe. It also creates for England a situation in which, for the first time in history, that country is bound to a constitution that is written down,¹⁵⁸ in specific and unwavering definition, and imposes itself on the English people when for hundreds of years their constitution has been one that was tacit in design.

Although there exists within this new system a voice for the population of this new federal state, it is, in all respects, window dressing in democratic terms. A European parliament¹⁵⁹ made up of 500 or so delegates elected by universal suffrage exists. Yet the

¹⁵³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Economic_Community

¹⁵⁴ http://circa.europa.eu/irc/opoce/fact_sheets/info/data/policies/agriculture/article_7208_en.htm

¹⁵⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_European_Act

¹⁵⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maastricht_Treaty

¹⁵⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Court_of_Justice

¹⁵⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_United_Kingdom

¹⁵⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Parliament

delegates are only allowed to offer opinions and suggestions on any legislation or laws that are passed. These representatives do *not* have the executive power or authority to pass legislation, as was the case in previous representative democratic governments. All these new European legislators of Western Europe can do is offer advice or recommend amendments.

The real power exists in the European Commission,¹⁶⁰ which has a total of 17 members—two from each of the largest states (Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and Spain), and one each from the seven smaller states (Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Luxembourg and Greece). Members are appointed to four-year terms and must be ratified by the council of ministers. The key point here is the power that they wield within this ever-growing European federal state. Once appointed, the members of the commission cannot be recalled, nor do they have any real political connection with their previous government. They are, for all intents and purposes, absolute dictators.

The council of ministers¹⁶¹ is a creation of the governments of the various member states. This is the EU's top legislative body and is comprised of members who are appointed by national governments. The council is empowered to act on proposals from the commission and to reach conclusions that take the form of regulations, directives, recommendations and opinions. Decisions of the council can be reached by majority vote for procedural questioning and by qualified majority for such issues that have been so specified by existing treaties and the SEA.

This further illustrates that the decision-making process, although complex, is not made by the people of Europe, but by a *political elite*. To fully comprehend the scope and character of this new federal authority, all you must do is examine the process by which legislation in the new federal state of Europe is passed.

Today, draft legislation goes from the appointed EU commission to the European parliament for debate, not ratification. From there it goes to the council of ministers, which itself is comprised of appointed members, and then to the various representative democracies of the continent, which are controlled by the representative democratic system of government that is bound to the party system. Nowhere in the process of creating a new law is the input of the public demanded or even accepted.

The Europe of 1997 is either positioning itself to be the greatest democracy of the world—as described from the perspective of its proponents as a new model of government that embraces liberty and the democratic process as a whole, that brings about not only the political change and accountability the masses have been calling for but also offers the people of Europe the economic prosperity they have been demanding—or, as the opponents point out, a super-state devoid of any democratic principles of accountability with this European Union nothing more than a consolidation of power among the elite of Europe, a bureaucratic monstrosity that will have little or

¹⁶⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Commission

¹⁶¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_the_European_Union

nothing to do with bringing greater political clout to the amassed poor of Western Europe, most of whom will still exist paycheque to paycheque.

Either way, only time will tell, since no one can foretell the future, and no one really knows what events lie in front of Europe and its people.

Will it become a United States of Europe, with a separation of powers that mimics the American tradition: limited government, and power evenly distributed between the states and a small federal authority? Or will it favour a more typical model of confederation like that seen in Canada, creating a strong centralizing authority in Brussels and demanding absolute obedience from the provinces—in this case the sovereign states of Spain, Italy, Portugal, etc. But regardless of any potential path, it will still be up to the people who inhabit the sovereign nations of Europe, like that young woman in Athens, Greece some 2,829 km away from Brussels, to decide if this new government is to be viewed as legitimate or not.

The United States of America

As detailed in the recent history of both Europe and Canada, power has been consolidated into the hands of fewer people, with two known consequences: the progress of individual economic prosperity has slowed and political freedom has diminished. And it is within this American context of consolidation that one can readily see how the movement of emancipation has also slowed; the fight for women's rights has lost much of the steam it once had in the early part of this century, and the possibilities open to African Americans and other minorities—both in economic and political terms—have also been curtailed. Even the United States of America, arguably the most democratic nation in the world today, has gradually moved away from its distributive powers of the constitution¹⁶² to a more centralized federal authority. From the electoral process of choosing the president right down to the economic buying power of the poor, the working poor and middle classes have with their dollar, the United States is slowly showing itself for what it is: a nation built by the many in which only the few prosper.

This push for consolidated power in the federal government began in earnest under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.¹⁶³ With the passage of the New Deal,¹⁶⁴ and despite his failed attempt to reform the Supreme Court,¹⁶⁵ a long process of steering America away from its constitutional roots and into a model of government empowered and structured more like the social-liberal societies found in Europe or Canada was initiated nonetheless.

Even after Roosevelt was long gone, the expansion of the federal government continued. By the early 1960s, President Dwight D. Eisenhower was warning of the dangers of a

¹⁶² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tenth_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution

¹⁶³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_D._Roosevelt

¹⁶⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Deal

¹⁶⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judicial_Procedures_Reform_Bill_of_1937

military industrial complex.¹⁶⁶ An excellent account of the growing power of Washington, D.C. is documented in *The Growth of American Government: A Morphology of the Welfare State*.¹⁶⁷ In it, the author describes America as a country where “There is now *one* person working in government for every *four* employees in private industry, producing the multitude of goods and services needed, consumed, and used by 210 million Americans or exported.”¹⁶⁸ This growth in government is most acute in such federal departments as Education, Environmental Protection and Defense.

Despite the ever-growing power of the federal government, there have been attempts over the years to address the many problems that exist in the American electoral process. With pressure from the civil rights movement¹⁶⁹ of the 1950s and 1960s, the American government finally acknowledged that there were major inequalities in the political process of the United States that needed to be corrected, especially racism, which was addressed with the passing of the *Voting Rights Act* of 1965.¹⁷⁰

However, despite an overarching legal framework like that mentioned above, court victories like *Brown v. Board of Education*¹⁷¹ or specific legislative measures like the *Fair Housing Act* of 1954,¹⁷² the need of the African American community to be able to participate in the electoral process without interference, to prosper economically without discrimination, to navigate a path upward through the classes, and participate in American society as equals has not been addressed at the end of the 20th century. If one needs proof that a barrier toward prosperity for many African-Americans still remains, you only need to recall the L.A. riots of 1992 or see the number of African Americans in prison.¹⁷³

Although addressed by the American Supreme Court in the last few years with favourable decisions,¹⁷⁴ the fact still remains that a majority of the American population is overlooked and even purposefully neglected in an attempt by the establishment to maintain its grip on power. Whether it be a municipal, state or federal riding, many poor, working poor and middle class areas are not effectively represented or heard when it comes to choosing the lawmakers of their time.

There can be no doubt for the reason of this stagnation in social and economic mobility or prosperity for the majority of Americans: the ever-growing federal authority that has acted as a *de facto* status quo over the past half-century, maintaining the supremacy of power for the two political juggernauts in American politics—the Democratic and

¹⁶⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military%E2%80%93industrial_complex

¹⁶⁷ Freeman, Roger A. *The Growth of American Government: A Morphology of the Welfare State*. 1975.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 41.

¹⁶⁹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_\(1955%E2%80%931968\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_(1955%E2%80%931968))

¹⁷⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act

¹⁷¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desegregation_busing

¹⁷² [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_housing_\(United_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_housing_(United_States))

¹⁷³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incarceration_in_the_United_States

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/scr/REDIST/red907.htm>

Republican national parties—with an ever more powerful Washington, D.C acting as the anchor.

The past few years of political scandal and needless debate over petty issues have shown the political establishment of America for what it truly is: a system of lost ideologies and grand gestures.¹⁷⁵ The American people have had a much-needed insight into the real reasons their political system is unresponsive and dispassionate to their needs.

It is no wonder, then, that in recent years the legitimacy and power that these two parties hold have been questioned. Like the rise of political alternatives to the establishment in Canada and Europe, the United States is seeing a movement by many who feel that their concerns are not heard by the established parties. Fuelled by voter apathy and mistrust, the American political scene has seen the rise of a third national party—the Reform Party¹⁷⁶ of the United States.

If anything, the election of the Reform Party Governor Jesse Ventura in Minnesota should be a wake-up call to the establishment of the United States that people are finally finding a way to express their dissatisfaction with inequality and established political tradition.

No greater example of the inequalities that exist in the United States can be found than the reality of the American economic landscape. To truly understand the growing gap between the haves and the have-nots of the American economy, you only need look at what happened in the last decade of the 20th century.

If anything could be said about the wealth and the prosperity generated in the last half of the 20th century, it is that it ended up in the hands of a very few. For the average American, the economic miracle of the 1980s and the 1990s was something they only read about in the paper and watched on television. Certainly, if you were to believe what the mainstream media in the United States said, it seemed that the United States was just about to turn the corner on everything from the eradication of child poverty to unemployment.

With talk about the new economy, the new paradigm of economics, no more inflation and much wealth, it sounded like the American dream could not be stopped. But, unfortunately, if you were to look closely at the statistics generated, you would find that much of what was being reported overshadowed the reality of life in America.

Of the reported 270 million people that make up the United States, roughly 237 billionaires were created in the 1990s. Prior to the 1990s, it is estimated that there were fewer than 20 people who could be considered billionaires. That is, only 257 people had

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_state_and_local_political_scandals_in_the_United_States#1990.E2.80.931999

¹⁷⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Party_of_the_United_States_of_America

more than \$1 billion in assets out of a total population of 270 million people. Of the remainder of that population, there were 590,000 people who could be defined as pentamillionaires—those people of a net worth of more than \$5 million. Next is the fact that of the remaining population, roughly 269 million people, only 7.9 million can be described as millionaires, and only 3.3 million of those were households that had a net worth of \$1 million in investable assets.

So, out of a total population of 270 million people, roughly 260 million had a net worth of less than a million dollars. But the statistics don't stop there. Of those people, the middle or median American household was worth just under \$36,000. That's an incredible *130 million people*. Astoundingly, half of this number had less than that. Perhaps the worst statistic of all is the fact that it is estimated that half of all American households had amassed less than \$1,000 in net financial assets.¹⁷⁷

The American dream should realistically be defined as the American illusion. Yet, despite the deplorable position of the American family, or the dreadful opportunities for work and salary prospects for the hard-working men and women that make up its workforce, it seems that the American political establishment and wealthy elite are willing to double down in terms of economic uncertainty.

Internationally, the United States has also succumbed to the pressure and ideal of a larger economic model that would reside outside the borders of the nation state. Perhaps the greatest example of this economic consolidation came in 1974, when the United States, in conjunction with other reforms made by the IMF, formally removed the United States from the Gold Standard on an international basis.¹⁷⁸ It was argued at the time that this key principle interfered with the creation of a more stable economic environment, since, as stated earlier, it was the collapse of the Gold Standard that was a contributing factor to the Depression of the 1930s.

Furthermore, with the signing of agreements such as NAFTA, the Free Trade Agreement, these agreements offer the American worker little in the way of wage increases or improved job security and opportunity. So far, these agreements seem only to enhance the prospects of the wealthy and political elite of each signing country at the expense of the poor and middle classes. In the short and long terms, these agreements do little to address the question of enhancing the possibilities for individual emancipation of the impoverished millions who are worked to death when these new economic agreements are put in place.

With the growing influence of international investment law (global capitalism), there has been a gradual weakening of the entire American industrial, manufacturing and financial sectors; rules and regulations are implemented with a nod to international standards, ignoring local authority and jurisdictions.

Furthermore, this world economic system seems geared to the ideas and legal

¹⁷⁷ These statistics were downloaded from a CNN article in 1999.

¹⁷⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nixon_Shock

interpretations found in the precedents of investment law cases, adjudicated from all around the world—all economic agreements between nations being forged through and arbitrated by organizations such as the WTO, whose decisions are binding for all nations, including the United States.

Perhaps of any country, the United States most clearly demonstrates the problems that will eventually confront those who try to move the issue of individual emancipation forward when democracy itself becomes stagnant for too long. Those problems include a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots, and a democratic process which will forever be entangled in a myriad of laws, legislative procedure and political pork barreling that will never allow for real change to occur.

Some of the consequences include a splintering along geographic lines, whereby regional governments will seek greater power or even pursue a policy of separation to go their own way. Perhaps the most daunting of any problem will be an uprising within the ranks of the disadvantaged, creating both political and economic turmoil.

Time allows for the development of an entrenched power base, which becomes increasingly difficult to remove through any part of the political process under which the state functions. Such examples of a bloated and dysfunctional government abound today. From the elected representative that panders to the masses to get elected, then turns around and serves only the goals and aims of their political and economic masters who work behind the scenes to the creation of initiatives and political issues that are of no real concern or help to the majority of Americans, the United States has forgotten much in terms of the unique principles of its creation: the emancipation of the individual, the right for men and women to live in freedom, and for each individual to pursue and define happiness on their own terms.

All that said, though, the United States of America has a lot to be proud of. Of all the nations upon this planet that call themselves a democracy, the United States is one of only two nations closest to meeting the definition.

TODAY'S GLOBAL ECONOMY AND THE NEW CONSTITUTION

The WTO and the Free Market

In 1999, the world was hurtling toward the largest free market system ever known. From Asia and the Pacific Rim to Europe and North America, global competition was a reality. From stock markets and futures markets to the sale of goods and services, the world began a competitive race.

Just as political power has been consolidated over the years, so too has economic power. It is this consolidation of economic power—thanks to the increasing influence of investment law—which forms the second half of the vice in which the working poor and middle classes of the world find themselves trapped. Through investment law, a new and entirely unchallengeable level of economic power is emerging that will eclipse not only the sovereignty of the nation state, but the rights of the individual as well.

Who could have imagined that the simple initiative to trade goods between European nations¹⁷⁹ so long ago would turn into the worldwide phenomena it has? From a simple system of free enterprise that existed mainly in two countries to a worldwide system that directs the lives of billions of people, the free market system has grown into an economic giant that transforms economic power into political influence.

Capitalism and parliamentary democracy, once promoted as the only way to prosperity for the majority of the people of the Western world, is today the foundation of a new level of control—a super state both in economic and political terms—to which there will exist no opposition or possible democratic accountability. To a great extent, all this has already been achieved. The world today has fused itself into great trading blocks that speak as one in both economic and political terms.

With the monetary union of Europe and the ever-increasing level of power that the European Union itself acquires through the consolidation of Europe and, to a lesser degree, in Canada and the United States through NAFTA, the world is now a step closer to having a unified global political and economic system.

Investment law has been created with its own structure of accountability and favours the transnational corporation, the international financier and Sovereign Wealth Fund.¹⁸⁰ Investment law is, in essence, the law upon which business functions. It is the business equivalent of the criminal code. It sets down the rules upon which business is to function and the penalties a corporation must pay if these laws are not obeyed. But investment law is creating its own legal jurisdiction that overrides the highest levels of international law and even the laws that govern sovereign nations. By creating its own separate and distinct institutions of enforcement and adjudication, it is replacing existing international institutions like the World Court and the United Nations as avenues of discussion, appeal and punishment.

¹⁷⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercantilism>

¹⁸⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_wealth_fund

Even more disturbing, this new area of investment law and institutions like the WTO are not accountable to any single nation state. Those who are at the head of this particular institution are neither public officials nor elected politicians. They are, instead, an elite group of wealthy industrialists who are accountable to no one. The rules they set down today are the equivalent of a world constitution in regards to the global economy. However, these regulations go far beyond the mere ground rules for world economic development. They have at their core a fundamental impact on such areas as labour, the environment, and other areas of public sector interest that have for years been the domain and jurisdiction of the sovereign nation state through a democratically elected legislature.

For many people, the WTO is just another unknown organization. The WTO is an international agency stationed in Geneva that links 135 countries to assure the freest possible flow of trade. Members agree to follow broad principles of openness in their economies and to move away from such things as government-supported subsidies of export industries.

The WTO rests on the jurisprudence of international investment law that impacts the lives of people around the world with its rulings. Should a domestic law be found to be in violation of the rules and regulations the WTO has set down, then that law becomes null and void and is no longer recognizable in any court as being valid. Furthermore, in theory, it then becomes possible to argue that some constitutional provisions that make the laws of sovereign nations possible in the first place are themselves illegal and may be overridden by the WTO. An excellent example of this is the particular section of the Canadian Constitution known as the *Canada Health Act*.¹⁸¹ Under certain circumstances, this provision could be viewed as a subsidy. As state-run healthcare, it would be illegal under the WTO's rules and regulations.

Prior to the Second World War, Western nations could move their economies in whatever direction they wanted without interference or obstruction from other countries. The Western nations had the power to create their own initiatives to control employment levels and interests rates. It was possible to maintain national standards in health and education, as well as industrial development and technological development. Nation states could create legislation and regulate everything from investment quotas to the amount of money a transnational corporation could take out of the country. But today, through the ever emerging power of investment law and the WTO, the right of any government to create such laws is now at risk.

Without the ability to control its own economy, the sovereignty of any nation is in jeopardy. But more importantly, the right of self-determination of the individual is also lost.

In the spring of 1998, the *Multilateral Agreement on Investment* (MAI)¹⁸² was due to be signed and ratified. Brought together by a consortium of transnational CEOs, and economic and academic elite, a select few of the world's business and financial ministers

¹⁸¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada_Health_Act

¹⁸² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multilateral_Agreement_on_Investment

set about to cement in law an economic model that would forever shape the direction of world investment and trade. In essence, this would be a global constitution of economic rules, regulations and laws within a new entrenched system of jurisprudence based upon the precedents of investment law. Its power and scope was so far-reaching that in theory the very idea of national sovereignty was at risk and no law was safe from interpretation in this new binding agreement. Furthermore, this new system had no real avenue of democratic access or appeal for those most affected by its rulings and decisions: the common man and woman.

Had it been signed and ratified, this document would have been in scope and character as historically significant as the signing of the Magna Carta,¹⁸³ but one that would have had just the opposite effect. Fortunately, due to the efforts of those determined to stop it, this document never made it off the negotiating table and into the legislatures of the various democracies of the Western world

Emboldened by their victory over the MAI, a small group of social justice activists and NGOs raised their voices in Seattle, Washington in 1999, engaging in a political discussion of the injustice they had seen with their own eyes, and carried forward a social movement to combat the political and economic consolidation tearing away at the social fabric of the West.¹⁸⁴

However, due to the accompanying violence and property damage, there was an outcry from many people who felt such tactics were unnecessary and even overshadowed the message that such a protest was trying to disseminate to those who were not politically engaged. But regardless of your opinion of the tactics and strategy used by the activists, they did manage to show to many in the West the unsound wisdom found within such a document as the MAI or the far more ambitious idea of globalization.

The importance of understanding what this unsound wisdom exposes in terms of the planning and preparation that is slowly being implemented here in the West and around the world cannot be stressed enough. The WTO, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and various other international organizations like the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision¹⁸⁵ or the Bank of International Settlements¹⁸⁶ will all be the determining factors in the future in terms of the world's economic and political power.

Their influence will be not only on a global scale but also a localized one, in terms of determining the future sovereignty of the individual and the nation state. Undemocratic, influential and typically one-sided in its decision-making processes favouring large transnational corporations, international financiers and the needs of the wealthy, these organizations present to the poor, working poor and middle classes a time of unprecedented concern.

¹⁸³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magna_Carta

¹⁸⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1999_Seattle_WTO_protests

¹⁸⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basel_Committee_on_Banking_Supervision

¹⁸⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bank_for_International_Settlements

It is this fifth and final pillar of the unsound wisdom found in the building of an economic model based upon the idea of globalization that completes the foundation of the answer to our original question of why the emancipation of the individual has taken a back seat to other political issues and ideas in Canada and the European Union.

To review, the first pillar explored the nature of power in Western society, using Canada and the life of one of its citizens as our guide. In the process of detailing how power was exercised in the Canadian context, it exposed the fact that the perceived power or sovereignty that many thought was invested in the individual really existed within the apparatus of the state, or other various collective entities of society. The second pillar shows, from a Canadian point of view, that the individual of the Western world has been deceived into believing that they control their destiny through the election of a few representatives every few years. The third pillar, again using a Canadian context as our guide, exposes a fundamental problem in how Western civilization is predominately driven by modern institutions that adhere to the primitive or tribal need to secure collective gain by controlling or destroying the very concept of the individual.

The fourth pillar expands our foundation beyond simply looking at Canada and opens our eyes to a more encompassing perspective, one that is highlighted and dominated by the lack of prudence used in the rebuilding of Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War. Here it was shown how the elite of Europe have, since 1945, continued to view the individual more as a byproduct of society rather than as an integral participant.

This complete disregard for the input of the individual in either the running of the economy in general, or politically in regards to the general direction of the nation state itself, was unmistakably overt—and no better example of this contempt was discovered than the resurrection and enhancement of that old world European notion that “others know best,” a notion present in every decision made in the building of the European Union, and by extension, a protocol most obvious when accepting answers to the great questions of life and economic prosperity that are faced by the people of Europe every day. The end result of this situation is the loss of both economic and political power wielded by the individual in Western Europe.

It is evident throughout all these five pillars that the individual remains an abstract concept as to the role that the “one,”—the me and the you—is to play within Western civilization. Each pillar that forms this foundation holds a concern about the level of interest those who govern in the name of people have in regard to the advancement, protection or expansion of the rights and liberties that all still cherish and enjoy in today’s Western society.

Furthermore, these five pillars show there is no one answer or simple solution that can address the problem of how to once again place the individual at the centre of Western civilization. What our question of individual emancipation demands is a multi-pronged answer, one that will work upon the many levels found within society, and one that not

only takes into consideration issues of democracy and economic liberty, but also more fundamental concepts like freedom, power, equality and truth.

An answer, it would seem, that the modern era¹⁸⁷ is incapable of providing.

¹⁸⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_history

SECTION II: THE DEMOCRATIC RENAISSANCE

THE GREAT ECONOMIC COLLAPSE OF 2008

The End of Western Economic and Political Legitimacy in the 21st Century

A mere nine years after the Battle in Seattle, the global economy collapsed in 2008.

What started out as a banking crisis in the United States of America in 2007¹⁸⁸ had, by March 2009, turned into a global rout of financial markers around the world; countries had gone bankrupt;¹⁸⁹ central banks of many Western nations were forced to nationalize their own banking systems,¹⁹⁰ and millions of people in the Western world were thrown out of work.

The elite of the Western world have shown once again that when they have free reign—a political system that refuses to listen to the ideas and desires of the majority; an economic system that prevents a just return or reward upon risk for investor and worker alike, and a legal system intent only on maintaining the hereditary lineage of precedent (forgoing the concept of justice in favour of selective privilege and profit)—a future of prosperity, opportunity and stability for the poor, working poor and middle classes is not guaranteed.

If the Great Economic Collapse has taught us—the common men and women of the West—anything, it is that the economic and financial institutions erected over the last 50 or so years have at their core a fatal and unjust flaw: they not only rely on the people for their profits, but also for their salvation in a time of crisis.¹⁹¹

So once again the common men and women of the Western world have been thrown under the bus. The direction of their lives irrevocably changed by an elite who take their position of power and influence for granted; *their* wealth protected, *their* chance for a prosperous tomorrow untouched. And for the rest of us? A taste of poverty—a chance for economic prosperity as realistic as winning the lottery. And for those without resources there is no recourse for this injustice; they must simply live in a world of misery and limited personal fulfillment.

Yet there are still others who suffer more than the rest in today's Shakespearean tragedy: our youth, who carry with them the burden of unemployment, a limited financial future, a political system that cares not for their desires, their wants and their goals; a legal system that would rather imprison them for their protests, imprison *them*, the young, whose fingerprints, of any societal demographic, are nowhere near the scene of this crime. This system is more interested in sending a message of law and order, using as scapegoats those who will bear the injustice and the punishing consequences of these crimes instead

¹⁸⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008%E2%80%932012_global_financial_crisis

¹⁸⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008%E2%80%932012_Icelandic_financial_crisis

¹⁹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008%E2%80%932012_Irish_banking_crisis

¹⁹¹ <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2013/0208/1224329790994.html>

of rendering a just verdict against those whose actions led to the Great Economic Collapse.

But through this heavy black cloud that hangs over so many, a silver lining is slowly emerging—and it comes from those of whom the world asks so much right now, offering very little in return. Today's youth hold the power to change things for the better, to create a future of prosperity, bringing with them a New Enlightenment shared by all, not just a few; a new world where words like trust, truth, democracy, freedom and prosperity flourish at the expense of none.

The effects and consequences of the Great Economic Collapse have only intensified as the days drag on: Ireland remains an island drowning in debt, the economy contracting again; Greece is bankrupt, an entire culture and the will of its people broken; Spain is on the verge of revolution...what was an economic crisis yesterday has become a political crisis.

As more and more evidence comes to the forefront of debate, and information is released into the daylight of normal conversation between people everywhere in the West, it has been revealed that the representatives who fill the parliaments of the Western world are not only incompetent but *incapable* of leading the rest of us into a future where economic prosperity and political power are open to all. As we now know and as history has recorded, the problem didn't begin within the agencies and bureaucracies of the economy. No, the roots of the crisis began with an attitude so prevalent in our parliamentary democracies: "only some were born to rule." The fact that even Americans are now beholden to an outdated and antiquated modern system of politics should not be lost on those who cry out for change today.

An even more disturbing realization is that the cause of this Great Economic Collapse here in the West was not necessarily a failure of capitalism as much as it was a failure of modern government in the form of *representational democracy*. Beyond the immediate effect of shredding economic theories of self-regulation and efficiency in a free market, it unleashed the unintended consequence of creating a political crisis of identity and legitimacy. Specifically, it cut the few remaining threads holding up the statist¹⁹² structure of government that has dominated the West for the last 50 years. From social-liberalism, modern liberalism, neo-liberalism¹⁹³ and the unworkable idealism of the progressive and their beloved social democracy,¹⁹⁴ all found their way into the dustbin of history, along with the idea that "government" can solve all problems.

We in the West are now confronted with a world devoid of ideas or solutions: the political left finding itself three sheets to the wind, as it tries to replace the loss of a complicit economic system in the pyramid and ponzi schemes that fund entitlement programs;¹⁹⁵ the modern left struggling with the fact that all it has is classical

¹⁹² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statism>

¹⁹³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoliberalism>

¹⁹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_democracy

¹⁹⁵ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Security_\(United_States\)#Claim_that_it_is_a_Ponzi_scheme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Security_(United_States)#Claim_that_it_is_a_Ponzi_scheme)

liberalism¹⁹⁶ as the answer to today's complex questions; and a fractured conservative movement that has always been viewed as suspect, existing upon shaky ground with its limiting philosophy and non-inclusive social outlook.

Furthermore, the political process found in all Western nation states today are reviled by the population at large—the economic systems in most Western nations are now no longer free markets, as central bankers everywhere are printing vast amounts of money through quantitative easing,¹⁹⁷ lending support to the entire system as it slowly drifts into chaos.

Moreover, if one were to also look at politics in general in the West today, one would see that what afflicts our economy also ails our political system; the electorate are drowning in false facts, outright fraud and manipulation that to this very day undermines the direction of our daily lives and those whose job it is to determine the meaning and direction of the state. Trust no longer exists in society. Our justice system protects the guilty. Our economic system provides prosperity for only a few. Faith in those who lead is gone.

No matter how you look upon this crisis of faith, be it from the standpoint of political science, philosophy or tradition, it would seem legitimacy is no longer the foundation of today's political and economic systems. For too long now in Canada and the countries that make up the European Union, *legitimacy* has been defined as something given only to those approved of by the elite; *meritocracy* has fallen from the lips of most, only now it is a word of limited meaning and influence.

From their perch high atop society's power superstructure—namely the political, academic and financial systems of the Western state—legitimacy has been bestowed on the privileged few or, in many instances, bought outright by those whose only claim to such trust is due to allegiances of ideology, birth or wealth. But as history has shown, exemplified today in those nations still strong in both belief and pragmatic implementation of enlightened thought, true legitimacy is none of these things. Legitimacy must be earned.

John Locke once said that legitimacy comes from the consent of the governed.¹⁹⁸ But that perspective and definition of legitimacy in our 21st century world can only be applied to the policies and objectives of those within the system, those in power. This definition of legitimacy is too narrow in definition to apply to the *entire* system itself.

The consent of the people is not enough to support a qualified opinion either in support of or against the system of democracy in use. The crisis of legitimacy goes much deeper than a rejection of the superficial parties and their specific ideologies running around in today's Western representative legislatures.

¹⁹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_liberalism

¹⁹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantitative_easing

¹⁹⁸ Locke, John. *Critical Assessment*. Richard Ashcroft (ed.). 1991. p. 524.

The system of representational democracy *itself* has fallen out of favour. Therefore, a new definition of political legitimacy must be sought out and expanded to truly know whether or not the status quo is no longer justifiable.

In the hope of creating a better and more just foundation of society in this, the 21st century, it is necessary to look at what political legitimacy means, through a concept that incorporates a much broader and robust definition. Does today's political system still have meaning?

This new definition of political legitimacy should begin with the old idea of *the consent of the people*, renewed with a "means test" whereby the core principles of democracy itself are shown to be either upheld or subverted when compared to the historical, philosophical and classical definitions of democracy. But our new definition must shift focus and administer judgment upon the system itself by asking, "Who benefits from this particular political system and who endures its burden?"

Since *consent of the people* has always been understood to mean "each individual constituent member of society," this question of *political benefit* can then only have relevancy and meaning if asked from the perspective of the individual. After all, it is only the individual upon whom a benefit can be furnished, as exemplified by our individual human rights, and the right to liberty that allows the individual to function in the West. Once the foundation of this individual concept of political benefit is secure, it must be expanded to include the notion of sustainability¹⁹⁹ in both the political and economic spheres of influence.

In essence, the judgment of whether or not any particular democratic system of governing is legitimate in the 21st century will require not only the consent of people invested in a verifiable democratic platform allowing for a politically free society, but also the assessment of political benefit, a concept founded upon the principles that the individual is the rightful heir to all benefits of the political system, and that a sustainable political atmosphere of participation and inclusion must provide for all. This atmosphere must further be capable of coping with an ever-changing world and unknowable future while ensuring that all laws passed within the political system create an equitable and prosperous economic environment for all individuals in the state.

When this new expanded definition of political legitimacy (anchored by the concept of political benefit) is applied against today's representative democracy, it reveals the inherent flaws of our current institution: a system that could not cope with or foresee the main causes of the Great Economic Collapse; the limited number of representatives in today's democratic West are too few, their positions of authority in direct conflict and contrast with the many issues and problems found within their areas of authority, their scope of influence and sphere of legislation all-encompassing, making them susceptible to corruption.

Compounding the problem, many of these representatives are inept and often ignorant

¹⁹⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainability>

despite a quality education.²⁰⁰ And on top of that, they are prone to self-aggrandizement, political one-sidedness and belief in ideological half-truths. Many must be described as incompetent when it comes to legislating in today's technologically advanced world. The final, and most damning, brick thrown through the window of political legitimacy is that these 19th century institutions are in no position to guide, troubleshoot or grow beyond the complexity²⁰¹ of today's society.

From the foundations of modern finance: derivatives, CDO,²⁰² CDS,²⁰³ CDO², to the needs of today's technological research institutes: the requirements of the scientific community, the intricacies of urban planning, and every other area that the government has its hands in, a few elected representatives and bureaucratic managers will never be able to run such a system of intricate complexity without throwing a wrench into the machine.

The only way to balance a world of such complexity is to involve more people in the decision-making and regulatory framework. But a bigger bureaucracy—or even the privatization of the administrative component in a representative state—only adds to the risks associated with complexity.

If representational democracy is required as a component of our definition of legitimacy, a bigger government only handcuffs the individual and his democratic rights; it does not enhance them. In essence, a sizable unelected bureaucracy becomes, in the end, a bloated system with too much internal procedure and political complexity of its own, revolving around the influence of a select few appointed managers or officials, thus rendering these regulatory and oversight bodies of authority obsolete, and further limiting the influence and input of the individual and his right to have a say in the decision-making process. Furthermore, the possibility of this financial crisis—or one similar in scope—occurring again only increases along with the size of the government.

Only through sustainability can institutional and technological complexities be overcome with public participation and more public oversight. Even though in the end these representatives hand off the daily oversight and administration of the state to a bureaucracy that is supposed to have the knowledge and education to make today's world function properly, the truth of the matter is that they still fall short.

Many advocate that we need to bolster civil society²⁰⁴ and work within existing organizations. But the problem is that many of these organizations are geared toward, and work hand in hand with the very government and systems that brought us all into this catastrophe in the first place. In fact, many organizations in today's civil society have been specifically set up by Western elite to reinforce the status quo.

²⁰⁰ <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/transcript-al-gore-got-d-natural-sciences-harvard>

²⁰¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complexity>

²⁰² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collateralized_debt_obligation

²⁰³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Credit_default_swap

²⁰⁴ ²⁰⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_society

Thus, it can be said justly and with truth that the elite of the Western world, and the systems that they embrace and offer to the rest of us as the foundation for society since the end of the Second World War, can no longer claim as their right, political or economic leadership and distributorship of prosperity—legitimacy is gone!

The future demands that we make a break with the past.

Unfortunately, a system of direct democracy or a government that involved more of the public in decision-making was not available to many in the West, and so the current economic and political crisis could not have been prevented. Now we in the West are faced with a situation the world has not seen since the collapse of Wall Street in '29 and the subsequent collapse of the Gold Standard in the 1930s²⁰⁵—another period of time where greed and control fills the minds of those who lead the Western world.

But this time, instead of ideologies that bring forth the likes of fascism, communism, socialism or racial and religious bigotry, the people, particularly the youth of the West, are turning to a more reasoned and more *enlightened* option. Unlike the millions of undereducated people who found themselves wandering the wilderness of the Great Depression, *this* time the world is filled with the most educated, skilled (trade skills) and entrepreneurial workforce the world has ever known.

People, especially today's youth, will not blindly follow peddlers of hate and intolerance like previous generations. Already young people of the world are showing their inherent good intentions and appreciable knowledge of what is just. From Spain²⁰⁶ to Greece, from the United Kingdom to Quebec,²⁰⁷ the youth of today are showing the rest of us what really matters.

The desire for a *democratic renaissance* is sweeping through the youth of the West.

Those of us looking for change must look to these youth; their hands not yet tainted with the stench of corruption; their minds nimble enough to counter lost and incoherent ideas and the hollowed out values of their teachers, parents or university professors. With their belief in the future and their own self-worth of possibility—defined by strong and competent characters—they will see through the haze of complexity, corruption and injustice. Through their eyes, we will see the possibilities that today's technology and spirit of democracy, equality and justice can foster.

More importantly, the youth of today have the power and knowledge to change the fundamental questions asked of each of us. This particular generation alone can flip the questions to reflect a more just and equal world than the one they were born into.

²⁰⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causes_of_the_Great_Depression#Gold_standard

²⁰⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011%E2%80%932012_Spanish_protests

²⁰⁷

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Quebec+student+protest+claims+cabinet+minister/6620270/story.html>

Who should benefit most from the spoils of economic progress? Is prosperity a question with an answer only the lucky few can attain? Is democracy, “real democracy,” workable within the confines of all the competing threads of power in today’s Western state? Or is democracy only intended to benefit the few politically well-connected who have “earned” the right to lead?

Western youth will have the courage to ask and the conviction to answer the questions “Who will have the final say over the direction of society; the path you lead in life; or even the kind of life desired?” Today, the answer to these questions includes only parents, the wealthy, the politically well-connected; society’s elite. Drill down and the answer actually manifests into mountains of student debt, part-time work, a missing social safety net, a limited future for children yet unborn, and a family unsustainable.

If the youth of today followed their natural instincts of freedom—what is right in their desires, their needs—they have the ability, the numbers and the intellect to offer not only themselves but the rest of us real freedom, real democracy and a real future.

The youth of today are alive at a seminal moment in human history when real change *is* possible. The world before the Great Economic Collapse was built from smoke and mirrors: misguided notions of human intellectual superiority, manufactured wants and desires, faith in money and not in the friendship or worth of our fellow human beings.

As in other periods of great change, it is the youth who are the tip of the spear, enablers of change who eventually move even kings off their thrones,²⁰⁸ aristocrats out of their bourgeois homes of elegance,²⁰⁹ bankers from their boardrooms²¹⁰ and topple tyrants looking to dominate the world²¹¹, making room for everyone in a world where everyone can prosper, where everyone—not just a select few—is free.

The conditions are now ripe to create an atmosphere where understanding and co-operation among all the people of the Western world can help speed us all through these troubled times, ushering in a new form of government that truly offers democracy, opportunity, prosperity, equality, justice and freedom.

And it will be the youth of today who will show the rest of us the way.

²⁰⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Civil_War

²⁰⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Second_Republic

²¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glass%E2%80%93Steagall_Act

DIRECT DEMOCRACY IRELAND: A MANIFESTO

There is a new political party in Ireland called Direct Democracy Ireland. As a distant member of this group, I offered to put forth a draft copy of a manifesto to help put shape and form to the many aspirations and ideas around which this group is trying to coalesce. Others within this group have also brought forth draft copies of a manifesto.

It must be stated clearly that a final manifesto has yet to be voted or agreed upon.

I am sharing my personal interpretation with the public in the hope that it will generate greater attention, interest and membership in Direct Democracy Ireland. Given the dire situation with which the Republic of Ireland is now confronted, it is imperative the people of Ireland know they are not alone in this, the darkest of hours.

A Call, Not to Arms, But to Action

There comes a time in the political life of all peoples, nations and states when the status quo no longer commands the respect and allegiance of those it is intended to serve. Regardless of whether these circumstances are found and formed from within society, or whether they are thrust upon a population due to foreign events, brought ashore simply by chance and bad luck, the onset of such happenings demands that a new course of action be brought forth by all individuals without partisan ideology or desire for personal gain.

It is this very situation that now confronts the citizens of the Irish Republic.

For no reason, want or action by the individuals who call Ireland home, we, the people, now face a world not of our making. Where once the future for all shone bright and strong, exemplified by the words *Celtic Tiger* and *sovereign citizen*, we now face a future of personal hardship, political uncertainty and economic misery.

It is this dire set of circumstances that now confronts every member of this republic; the very foundation of the Irish state is at risk of collapse.

Unfortunately, the elected representatives of the Irish parliament, entrusted to prevent such a catastrophe from happening, are themselves complicit architects in these events and continue, to this day, to bring misery upon the Irish people.

We, the sovereign citizens of the Irish Republic, demand action and answers to this unacceptable set of circumstances.

We Are Not Alone...

As we look around the world, we, the people of the Irish Republic, can see that what afflicts us in our land also burdens all of mankind. From the islands that once made up the Greek state, now for sale to the millions on the Spanish mainland who have no prospect of employment, to the bankrupt and insolvent banking system enslaving the people of Iceland to a future world of deflation and economic loss; from the dwindling population that was once East Germany, whose emigrants have set out across the continent in search of work, to the millions who no longer have a home due to foreclosure in the United States—these tens of millions who once worked toward a prosperous future now find themselves in poverty, unemployment and economic depression.

Everywhere you look in the Western world, there is a loss of hope and a future of false promise. We do not necessarily see the underlying cause of the Great Economic Collapse as a failure of capitalism or the idea of a free market so much as a failure of *representational democracy*.

By the very hands of those who have been entrusted with the security and prosperity of the state—those representatives who dwell in legislatures throughout the Western world—have we been deceived; when confronted with the totality of the economic collapse, they abused and usurped the trust which the people had given them. Ignoring their fiduciary role of overseeing the economy with responsibility, due diligence and with the economic rights of the individual of the state in mind, the representatives of many of the West's democratic states, including our own here in the Republic of Ireland, offered to the wealthy and elite, the corporations and the banks, a bailout, a grant, a loan that will forever relieve them of their financial obligations and losses incurred by poor investments—and, in some cases, outright fraud—their debts wiped out and all allowed to continue as if nothing ever happened!

The citizen of the Western world has been sacrificed as a broker and lender of last resort, set adrift to fend for himself with nary an apology, policy or plan to right the wrongs or begin a path of redemption and possible salvation for the members of these states.

For us, the poor and the working classes, born without privilege and our chance to work toward prosperity stolen, our dollars are worth pennies and pocket lint trumps change!

It is the betrayal of trust and confidence in those who were elected to lead that has brought us, the people of the Irish Republic, to a point where we must ourselves bring forth action and answers for a world with neither possibility nor purpose.

The Coming Democratic Renaissance

As if an economic collapse were not enough, over the last few years, we, the Irish people, have continued to see a never-ending flow of sovereignty and responsibility from our

parliament to unelected councils, commissions and courts found on the continent in the European Union.

Decisions that affect the lives of every individual in the Republic of Ireland have been influenced, corralled and gathered in fewer and fewer hands. This, despite the embracing by the Irish people of electoral reforms such as alternative vote and proportional representation.

Most disturbing is the fact that too many academics, political activists and legislators continue to describe, define and ameliorate electoral reform with a broadening of the democratic process. Furthermore, many who comment and advocate for these electoral schemes remark that this weakening of the democratic process and the erosion of the rights of the individual is a natural occurrence in the creation of a just, progressive state. They define this new federalism with its appointed ministers, judges and bureaucrats as the only viable and sustainable form of government for the future. They say that this reality of diminished individual rights and limited political choice is what the Irish people want. We say...

that we see just the opposite!

We see a coming Democratic Renaissance on the horizon.

All around the world, more and more people are demanding an increased say in how governments are run. From the Tea Party in America to the Swiss model of direct democracy; from the anti-HST battle in British Columbia, Canada to the endless number of non-governmental organizations that make up civil society, who practise a form of democracy in their corporate structure—all demand *more* democracy, not less.

Just over the horizon is a future with more public participation in every decision-making process the state currently reserves for elected representatives. From the formation of the judiciary to the proper choice of the executive invested to run the Irish bureaucracy, to those chosen to administer and regulate the taxation department and distribute the finances of the Irish Republic, more public participation is not the problem, it is the *solution*.

We come to these conclusions through our understanding of the written history of the ongoing evolutionary cycle that *is* the democratic process and system. Representational democracy is only the first of many steps to individual sovereignty, greater political freedom and economic prosperity for all.

Our history on this island was founded upon the idea of public participation. With the creation of the Free Irish State in 1922 and along with it our first constitution, referendum by the people was a stated fact.

It is from this starting point of the right of the Irish people to administer the state through referendum that we see the beginnings of our contribution to this coming Democratic Renaissance.

There is no need to repeat the victories of the past. Hard-won human rights, liberties of association and expression, and political, economic and legal freedoms secured over the past 250 years are the foundation upon which the Direct Democracy Party of Ireland is founded.

The values of freedom and choice the Irish people have cherished and fought for will not be forgotten, but will, in fact, be strengthened and enhanced.

Nor should we or will we relinquish our obligations and responsibilities to our fellow citizens of the European Union; we will honour our commitments and responsibilities through the various treaties and laws already signed and enacted by the Irish State. Further, our intentions and policies ensure that we will honour all existing responsibilities and obligations to the world community by continuing to interact with all world bodies of authority such as the World Court, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the United Nations.

We believe that the policies and programs we want to bring forth to the Irish people will be the answers our representatives in the legislature have so far failed to provide.

If we are to turn the tide of this endless downward spiral that encompasses nothing but higher taxes, a limiting of the freedom of political thought, and an economic dead-end, we must rally together to put forward policies that work for all, not just a few. If we are to bring prosperity and hope back to the Irish people, we must work together regardless of religion, class or education.

If we are to find the solutions for this republic, we need your help.

If you feel as we do, then join with us, the Direct Democracy Party of Ireland, in this historic opportunity to help and expand the democratic process and blaze a new path towards individual freedom, political choice and economic prosperity.

Author's Note:

In the spring of 2010, I was contacted by Vincent Salafia about joining a new political group in Ireland: Direct Democracy Ireland. In the summer of 2010, this manifesto was released in Ireland on the political and forum website www.politicalworld.org and by the spring of 2011, it was prominently displayed on the website of the group Direct Democracy Ireland.

As this manifesto continued to be displayed on the website of Direct Democracy Ireland into 2012, I found myself working with Paul Clarke who was my contact

person. Throughout 2012 and 2013 Direct Democracy Ireland continued to grow and become more organized politically. By the time 2013 appeared, this manifesto was taken down in favour of a new approach in attracting members and interest.

In 2013 Direct Democracy Ireland was incorporated into a political party and introduced Ben Gilroy²¹² as its new leader. In that year the party went from strength to strength, and set up branches in every corner of the country. It achieved an outstanding result in the Meath East by-election where Ben Gilroy finished a very credible 4th ahead of the Labour Party.

May 2014 will see Direct Democracy Ireland put forth 19 candidates in the local Irish election and four more DDI candidates will try to secure a seat in the European Parliament. This will show people exactly what can be achieved in the future and give hope to those disillusioned with politics and life in Ireland.²¹³

New “National Executive” consists of the following people:

- * National Chairman: Jeff Rudd
- * General Secretary: Anthony Connor
- * Director of Elections: Conor Delgarno
- * Media Executive: Kevin Brady
- * Treasurer: Gerry Flood
- * Policy Executive: Colin Ryan
- * Youth Executive: Gary Wilton.

²¹² Ben Gilroy stepped down as the leader of DDI on February 17, 2014 for personal reasons.

²¹³ www.directdemocracyireland.ie

SECTION III: A NEW ERA OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The Democratic Renaissance Springs Forth into its Second Year

A New Era of Enlightenment Emerges

Eyes have been opened. Minds have been freed.

At the time of its publication in the summer of 2010, who could have imagined that the Direct Democracy Ireland manifesto, with its foreshadowing of a democratic renaissance, would be the first document of its kind to accurately describe a political and intellectual movement yet to attain substance and form: an aspiration that resided solely in the hearts and minds of millions around the world, brought closer together through technology and social media; an audacity to dream a little dream of freedom, dignity and hope everywhere, emboldened by the unshakable belief that a life of endless political and personal freedom, coupled with economic prosperity, *is* possible.

This movement, first described in the media as the “Arab Spring,” has only grown since its unleashing in the fall of 2010.

Though the winds of change began to be felt in North Africa and the Middle East, the Arab Spring has blown into a whirlwind of revolution: Tunisia is free, Gaddafi is gone in Libya, the regime of Bashar-Al Assad is crumbling, and Egypt is slowly crawling toward a democratic denouement.

Be it prescience or just happenstance, the recognition of a Democratic Renaissance here in the West has today come to fruition, not only in the Republic of Ireland, but across continental Europe and North America. People are involved and demanding a greater say. Their inspiration? Those who have thrown off the shackles of political repression and fear—the foundation of totalitarianism and oppression. Tens of thousands have gathered in city squares from Athens to London.

But the Democratic Renaissance has brought with it much more than just new voices of political freedom: it has once again sent the individual down a new path of empowerment and intellectual enlightenment, a path filled with new perspectives and new ideas of a future within the grasp of men and women everywhere, grounded in the ideas of reason, logic and common sense; a path that markedly resembles one the human race abandoned long ago in favour of war, ideology and consumerism...

the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries took place in a time similar to ours. The world was torn by wars of religion, by imperial and economic conquest. Persecution and witch-hunts were widespread. Looking closely at the activities of today’s activists, you might be surprised to note the similarity both of tactics and the intended outcome of such confrontation: political and intellectual assassination without just cause or trial.

Now, as then, the call for more democracy and freedom has also unleashed a set of circumstances and events showing the world to be little changed from the past, when Europe itself was ruled by the heavy hands of aristocratic and priestly enslavers. Even though we in the West have rid ourselves of private armies, mercenaries and countless wealthy overlords, there are those still struggling for their freedom in the Middle East and North Africa.

Yet, as recent history has shown, humanity is trending in the direction of *less* rather than *more* freedom, a world of shackles rather than a world in which people live in the full light of liberty and reasoned intellectual understanding. Really, how different is our world from that of our ancestors, who struggled to free themselves from oppression and the tyranny of a ruling elite? Now, as then, do not the elite view the rest of us who dwell in rural prefectures, bankrupt suburbs and urban slums with indifference and contempt?

Certainly the West has come a long way from feudal landlords and debtor prisons. But has the individual really gained any more power since the final days of revolution in the 18th century? We may be more prosperous, we may have more stuff, but are we really any more *free*?

People in the West continue to face soft tyranny and systemic oppression even now.

Are today's bankers any different than the lords and barons who ruled in centuries past? Back then, we were at the mercy of and reliant upon the generosity of an elite class for our livelihoods and future prosperity. Can anyone get anywhere today without a loan or a mortgage that must be repaid with the price of interest, doubling and sometimes even tripling the final price of your home or car? And what is the difference between being required to adhere to a dogmatic religious code of conduct and the need to be politically correct to gain entry into a good paying job?

The major themes of the Enlightenment are kindred spirits with the zeitgeist of today. As Professor Paul Brain, Washington State University writes, "Like then, individualism, freedom and change replaced community, authority and tradition as core European values."²¹⁴

And the similarities do not end there. As in the Renaissance, we are now coping with the end of one way of thinking and the emergence of new avenues of introspection. Just as the influence and importance of the church was on the wane then, science, as a vehicle to provide future intellectual growth and economical, technological progress is today grinding gears and losing traction.

Yet, today's science is not like that of the Renaissance, which exploded through this magnificent and powerful tool of investigation to enlighten people. No. Today we are faced with boundaries and limitations that were not even conceived of then. John Horgan's *The End of Science* is probably the best description of just how daunting—and

²¹⁴ http://public.wsu.edu/~brians/hum_303/enlightenment.html

possibly insurmountable—are the obstacles that face those searching for tomorrow's answers to today's questions.

If we were to truly take an unbiased look at the Western world today, we would find a civilization in decay; its economic structures crumbling; a people politically lost; an economy teetering on the edge. Worse, we are intellectually a fragmented and disjointed people driven by irrational fears and beliefs that stifle lasting economic, political and individual prosperity.

Perhaps it is fitting, then, that the world should find itself in the throes of rebellion and revolution.

For us in the West, the Arab Spring has become a Democratic Renaissance. It has brought forth an entirely new realm of political possibility and individual enlightenment.

Truly, it can only be a matter of time before the energy and enthusiasm that fills the streets will find its way into other avenues of intellectual investigation and enlightened activity, exemplified by art, literature and philosophy.

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Part I: The Democratic Renaissance and Its Meaning

From Cairo to Athens and Quebec, A New Political/Intellectual Enlightenment Defined

“If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday.”

-Pearl S. Buck

To truly comprehend the demands of the people taking to the streets in the West today, it is necessary not only to document the lost promises and squandered opportunities of the Enlightenment in present-day Europe and Canada—inflicted and visited upon the population by a myopic, selfish and narcissistic elite over a period of nearly 200 years—it is also prudent to provide a complete and accurate understanding and definition of the Enlightenment itself.

But expounding upon so long and contentious a list of names and events would just turn people off; reading such a voluminous piece filled with so many grievances, frustrations and intellectual incantations would only belay its purpose. Another avenue of introspection must be explored here in this short essay: on the one hand allowing the context of today’s fight and subsequent demands to be clear, giving full insight into why the elite of many Western nations cower in corners hoping that the indignant will just go away, while on the other, providing the reader with some sense of what the Enlightenment was.

Much has been written over the years about how to define or perceive this period of history. By luck or providence, Jonathan Israel has provided the world with a new work that goes a long way in helping to define the Enlightenment. As he points out in *Democratic Enlightenment Philosophy, Revolution and Human Rights 1750–1790*, the Enlightenment was “the most important and profound intellectual, social, and cultural transformation of the Western world since the Middle Ages and the most formative in shaping modernity.”²¹⁵

Granted, this historical assessment will probably be disputed by scholars and readers alike. Still, the question remains: what *is* the Enlightenment?

Again, Jonathan Israel provides clarity: “Peter Gay was right to claim that the ‘men of the Enlightenment united on a vastly ambitious programme, a programme of secularism, humanity, cosmopolitanism, and freedom, above all freedom in its many forms—freedom from arbitrary power, freedom of speech, freedom of trade, freedom to realize your talents, freedom of aesthetic response, freedom, in a word, of moral men to make his way in the world.’”²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Israel, Jonathan. *Democratic Enlightenment Philosophy, Revolution and Human Rights 1750–1790*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011. p. 3.

²¹⁶ *ibid.*

This definition of the Enlightenment goes even further, pointing out that “It is also largely valid to say that the Enlightenment ‘began not as a definite “thing” or even as a chronological period, but as a process concerned with the central place of reason and of experience and of experiment in understanding and improving human society.’”²¹⁷

Now that a simple base of understanding of the Enlightenment has been established, how do we go about putting into context what has been lost by so many because of so few?

For purposes of expediency and thrift, it is simpler to describe the reasons rioting and mass unrest are *not* taking place in the countries that have followed the principles and values espoused by the philosophers and thinkers of the Age of Reason over the past 200 years, fulfilling their obligations and responsibility to their peoples by offering a society founded upon freedom, reason, experience and experiment.

Switzerland: a country that practises direct democracy; a country that has not fought a war in over 80 years; a country whose banking sector has come through the Great Economic Collapse relatively unscathed; a country that is the model of economic prosperity;²¹⁸ a country with a political system nimble enough to address the concerns of the people without a backlash or protest movement taking to the streets, without incurring the wrath of rioters torching their own communities; and a country deft enough to understand the perils of economic integration in Europe and take a pass on accepting the euro as its currency, not in an effort to defend its sovereign monetary system, but rather to protect its democracy and enlightened freedoms from the heavy hand of European unionism and integration.

The United States of America: a country that shares the top spot with Switzerland in terms of democratic recourse, and allegiance to the principles and values of the Enlightenment has not been a target of rioting either, despite the economic plight of tens of millions: 45 million use food stamps every month, millions have lost their homes to foreclosure, and 20 million or more are out of work. Contrast those statistics with a total population of 330 million, each having a relative amount of wealth and prosperity based upon individual skills and abilities, and yet the people still respect the rule of law, and continue to have faith in the political and economic system of the United States.

But is that really true? Some will cry out upon reading this: Have you not read the opinion polls regarding U.S. political representatives? Support of those in the U.S. Congress is the lowest it has ever been!

Agreed...but that, however, is another kettle of fish, for it is about *who* holds office, not the office *itself*.

So why is there stability in a time of such trouble? Because the political system remains dynamic enough to allow the voice of *all the people* to be heard; the Tea Party—a real

²¹⁷ *ibid.*

²¹⁸ World competitive world rankings. <http://gcr.weforum.org/gcr2011/>

grassroots example of populism, a group of Enlightenment warriors who see the folly of abandoning principle for the sake of expediency and ideology, a group capable of pushing their ideas from mere protest and cries of constitutional abandonment into policy platforms and prospective legislation—shows that the system works as designed, the general will of the majority can be expressed and fulfilled.

Further, if you were to look deeper into the American electoral system from California to Wisconsin,²¹⁹ you would see an engaged electorate and, more to the point, a system that still offers opportunity, reform and input at every level of power and government for all those who do not define themselves as elite.

These two countries are shining examples of what the first era of Enlightenment brought: dynamic political and economic systems, and an open and free society. They have achieved the impossible: the elimination of the soft tyranny and systemic oppression now rife throughout the rest of the Western world. Unsurprisingly, it is this stability, democratic freedom and experience—embodied by the principles and values of the Enlightenment—that the rest of the Western world has suddenly realized it wants.

But how do those who want to embrace the principles and values of the Enlightenment do so when many in the West are confronted by both a state structure and an elite consumed by ideals and philosophy that runs counter to the supremacy of the individual, the idea of reason, the soundness of common sense and the need for freedom?

²¹⁹ “Democrats fall short in Wisconsin recall elections.”

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44075969/ns/politics-more_politics/t/democrats-fall-short-wisconsin-recall-elections/.

Part II: The Democratic Renaissance and Its Meaning

“Not until we are lost do we begin to understand ourselves.”

-Henry David Thoreau

Despite recent political activism and a challenge to the status quo not seen in generations, there remains in many Western countries intransigence and organized obstruction to the will of the people. Despite the circumstances advantageous to change brought about by the Great Economic Collapse, the most recent elections in Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Denmark reveal that power is still in the grip of an elite, regardless of the fact that their ideas and policies are discredited in the streets.

In more practical terms, this intransigence is igniting a new and dynamic debate that two centuries ago also provided the kindling for the Enlightenment. Back then, it was the notion of rule by divine right held by the elite that brought about protest and change. It was opined that the rulers of the aristocracy and the Church were direct descendants of God and therefore only they were worthy enough to occupy seats of power, while the rest sat on logs with neither bread nor cake.²²⁰ Then, as now, the Western world appears to be full of those who earn only the contempt of the elite, as did Jean Valjean.

Today, this line of questioning has people across Europe and Canada once again reevaluating the core political structures and economic systems that affect their lives. The disgust of the people is vocal in all countries, be they republics, constitutional monarchies or parliamentary democracies. Since the onset of the Great Economic Collapse, thousands have taken to the streets to demand more control over their lives, a bigger say in the creation of laws and more input at every level of government concerning the running of the state. This new era of questioning first appeared in Iceland when their banking system collapsed in the fall of 2008, with the government disintegrating soon after.²²¹

In continental Europe, three nations in particular are worth noting for their long-time rejection, in whole or part, the ideas and teachings of the Enlightenment. These countries have spawned the largest protests: Spain, a country that did not employ democracy until 1975; Greece, ruled by a military junta until 1974; and Portugal, another military dictatorship that did not embrace democracy until 1976. But the feeling of disenchantment and powerlessness in the face of today's problems can also be found in other European states, countries with a dynamic political structure that does reflect at least *some* portion of the general will of the people.²²² In nations like the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, there has been dissent, though on a much smaller scale, and the same vein of questioning has also arisen.

²²⁰ “Divine Right of Kings.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_right_of_kings.

²²¹ “2008-2011 Icelandic financial crisis.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008%E2%80%932011_Icelandic_financial_crisis.

²²² “Government of France.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_France#Local_government.

The effect of the Great Economic Collapse has been twofold for us in the West. On one hand, it has revealed a democratic process open to abuse, corruption, mismanagement and undue influence by the elite, while on the other hand, it has produced a disturbing picture of how the very structure of many of today's Western states function: limited individual right of self-determination; economic systems incapable of producing enough jobs; limited resources of affordable and quality education for the middle class; limited social mobility to move up through the classes; and a cultural void in both narrative and substance.

For many in Europe, the narrative of the state has been woven around the words *democracy* and *freedom* over the years. But the Great Economic Collapse has revealed a missing link in the genetic DNA of these Western states and to those ideas born of the old Enlightenment. If you were to look at the European protests from purely a state-specific point of view, it would appear that the demands of the people are directed at *democratic* problems within that state: demands of "real democracy" reveal a genetic mutation, a cancerous tumour in our *free state*. Free and fair elections every four or five years, but no chance of recall for representatives; economic free markets, but an economy run by boards and councils appointed by those in power; civil and human rights protections—a tacit acknowledgment to the supremacy of the individual and enforcement of human rights—but a closed and appointed judiciary. Without the freedom that so captured the minds of men and women in years past, democracy is only an election.

But if these protests are seen holistically, encompassing a much broader perspective, the incorporation of the current debate and viability of a common currency, the euro is discovered to be part and parcel of the undemocratic and intrusive agenda of an ever-growing European Union, an unelected and intrusive European Court, an appointed European Council, and a powerless European parliament. And so a disturbing picture begins to emerge, one of a truly limited definition of democracy and freedom with a number of common threads weaving their way through the discussions and agitations enveloping the people of Europe today.

Since many of these threads are still being spun, their meanings are not yet fully defined and their importance in the debate is still unclear. Workshops in the streets and various political organizations are still debating, in fact, what the problem actually *is*, and so it is prudent to focus solely on the one thread that has so far shown itself in its entirety and that creates a bond between the "then" of the Enlightenment and our "now," a thread that twists around the definition and boundaries of the word *control*.

We are a race of beings obsessed with the idea of control; for many amongst us this helps drive our lives in positive ways: striving to learn; creating better atmospheres where individual control trumps government- or group-think. But for some this need to control is problematic. They take this obsession to dizzying heights; control over our environment, our thoughts and those of others; a manic need to manipulate words, purposefully twisting meaning and replacing words with others that have been *approved*; carefully forgetting facts and consciously confusing dates. These individuals see not just a need but a necessity, a destiny of sorts, a perceived greater knowledge and

understanding that the rest of us lack that encourages them to involve themselves in others' activities and relationships; to administer the public space, regulate individual choice and sanction the material possessions of our fellow human beings.

This obsession ultimately manifests itself into physical forms of government and political relationships that set up barriers and walls between those who have power and those who do not: politicians looking to create a legacy; groups furthering their ideological grip upon society; and those already with wealth or privilege enforcing an unsustainable status quo upon the general public without regard or care for their input or beliefs.

Since time immemorial, the individual of the human race has been born into bondage—and it seems no matter the progress made in challenging and correcting this great injustice, we continue to see forms of government and other aspects of political control that set the individual up as a slave to another. Such is the status quo confronting individuals in Europe, whether in 1712 or 2012. Our world is one of repeating histories, always coming full circle, never truly escaping, like being born with feet firmly mired in quicksand.

A further troubling fact is that *democracy* is a foreign word both to our language and to our ways of living with one another. It seems more natural to live in a top-down society, with a chieftain or feudal lord or king or queen—a world of Communist komissars, military strong men or addlebrained tyrants—than in a republic of free men and women, a world of “united states” filled with individuals born equal under the law, and with rights and freedoms applicable to all, with a foundation of universal suffrage and democratic recourse for *all* the workings within the state.

Had we formed the first democratic union the instant we had the opportunity, would not history be filled aplenty with democratic states from the beginning of memory? Would despots and oppressive regimes not be the anomaly instead of the norm if democracy were truly a natural form of organization to our particular being?

But despite this very troubling aspect of human nature, it does not mean that those who believe in democracy, freedom and the sovereignty of the individual will always lose their way; it just means that those of us who believe in such concepts must work harder to ensure that those among us who do *not* believe never take hold of the reins of power. Unfortunately, it has become plain that those who are part of the West's ruling elite no longer believe in these noble and just ideas.

Already today's elite see this new Era of Enlightenment as a threat; from their perspective, the new is just as problematic as the old. For years they have been slowly shutting the door to the emancipation of the individual. Now, all of a sudden, there springs forth not just a new door, but an entire worldview that embraces philosophical concepts of freedom and individualism. The cry has already gone out, “It's time to take back the Enlightenment.”²²³

²²³ http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-republicans-war-on-science-and-reason/Katrina_vandenHeuvel

For some it will not be enough to ignore the past; the Enlightenment will have to be redefined, fixed, adjusted to suit the needs of today and tomorrow.

Their future enlightenment will be “reason, evidence and science.”

It is not just what this new, limiting definition encompasses that is disturbing and points to a wandering in the intellectual wilderness, but what this future leaves out. Where is freedom in all its forms? Where is truth? Where is the individual? Where is democratic recourse? Where is logic? Where is God?

Going back to change the past. Going forward without the past. Lessons learned and forgotten, their importance and meaning disregarded. How do we orient ourselves in such a world; what compass allows us to see direction; what map leads us to our destination...?

If only solving the problems inherent to life and existence were as simple and straightforward as constructing a guillotine!

Part III: The Democratic Renaissance and Its Meaning

“Only when something is completely gone can you understand its importance.”

Those of us who are not lucky enough to live in Switzerland or the United States of America cannot go back to the old Enlightenment to recreate the possibilities and events of those years. Our world is so different in structure and form, the institutions that form the foundation of *our* nations are hollow, and there are no real grassroots connections that stretch through all of society; the individual is not welcome within those walls. Worse, our institutions are dominated by an elite whose groups and organization are rife with corruption and ideology, and nothing is more important than being a member. With membership comes privilege, but it is a membership soaked in vice. This environment, coupled with a history and level of technology so different from days past, has caused noble notions like democracy, individualism, experience and experiment to become anathema to each other, the deliberate intention of an elite with no interest in allowing the meaning and purpose of those ideals to be fulfilled.

No, going back is not an option. The path behind those Western states that have shrugged off the old Enlightenment—picking piecemeal through its carcass, scavenging only for those words or structures and phrases that are just enough to quench the need for freedom and soothe the restless soul of the individual, all with the goal of making each of us docile and content but offering in the end only a quasi-free state of existence with boundless opportunities to spend our profits on all the worldly goods produced—has been revealed. *We have now learned the truth of this path, thanks to the Great Economic Collapse and the ensuing example of stability from those nations that enshrined the Enlightenment in their foundation.* Money and ideology are no substitute for a society founded upon the values and principles of the old Enlightenment: freedom in all its forms, a world of unlimited individual experience, a life of unharnessed experiment in the quest for greater human understanding. It is, however, an avenue that cannot be traversed by simply going in reverse, though the status quo is intolerable. All that is left for us is to go forward, together. And, as evident by today’s circumstances and events, even those states that have afforded themselves a lifestyle and society based upon the ideas of the old Enlightenment have outstripped and outgrown the answers provided in years past.

Everywhere in the West, the powerful elite spends its time manipulating our societies into conforming with its own ideology, protecting the needs of special interest groups or their friends, all the while ignoring the pressing needs of the majority. The individual in today’s Western world is confronted with a situation wherein his or her very existence is threatened: there is inadequate access to working capital to begin a business, buy a home or finish school. Financial products do not offer a reasonable return, stock and bond markets are dominated by hedge funds, and financial institutions have been given the ability to manipulate markets with a touch of a button, making them unsafe for the simple retail investor. The price of food, fuel, electricity and heating oil is skewed or unaffordable; homes are worth less than their mortgages,²²⁴ leading to foreclosure; uneven and ineffectual educational opportunities are structured around ideology, political

²²⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/04/realestate/refinancing-while-underwater-mortgages.html>.

favouritism, wealth and academic special interests; employment opportunities are thwarted and lost in a system still entrenched in the lingering structures of guilds, unions and class. Oh, there is a plethora of problems that require not only state-specific solutions but real leadership, and a philosophy and understanding that goes beyond borders.

What do the elite offer to fix these problems?

Another blind road on a quest for creating the perfect world instead of fostering the freedom of the old Enlightenment and allowing for failure. From failure comes strength and a deeper understanding of self. No, we are treated instead to an intrusive political class that cannot get enough of regulating the daily lives of the individual. A government needs to be responsive, interested in “real democracy,” allowing the will of the people to determine a course of their own choosing, and in the end to build a stronger society, one capable of creating a vibrant today and prosperous tomorrow. But the elite respond by spending their time passing laws aimed not at the importance of free speech, but instead at why you should be *protected* from speech;²²⁵ criminalizing what is legal, not for a want of what is just, but for what is harmful. Days are spent campaigning with omnipotent proclamations; speeches and town halls are aimed not at bettering our world and the plight of the powerless, but at further control of the life of the individual.

From their lead, our morals have become lost in economic globalization and worldly political connections. The current political system no longer maintains itself through any moral or ethical footing; we have monetized our values and foundational beliefs, and in doing so we have created a situation where right and wrong are now equal in value, each purchased for the appropriate price, placing no sense of worth or propriety upon either the buyer or seller. And let’s not forget the academic skullduggery of our time; look at the enigma that the words *liberal*²²⁶ and *equality*²²⁷ have become. All this and more shows those of us looking for change that the past offers only half measures, partial solutions and ideological dead ends to today’s problems.

The only way forward for *we, the people* of the past, is to realize *we* are now *the people of today*.

No matter our country, no matter our station in life, we all are being presented with an unbelievable opportunity to now make things better in the world. To succeed in this endeavour, everyone needs to embrace this new questioning, the emerging New Enlightenment. There is nothing more urgent or pressing in today’s world for the individual than participating in the debate of how to make freedom, democracy, individuality and economic prosperity work for all.

The time has come for us, the common men and women of the West, to go forward with our experiences and offer our own solutions, coupled with the lessons learned from the

²²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_complaints_against_Maclean's_magazine

²²⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/aug/15/liberalism-political-economic-different-ideologies>

²²⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equality>

past, the old Enlightenment, as our guide and mentor, and tackling tomorrow with new attitudes and avenues of intellectual insight. Today's events are centred on the very issues that affect people the most, and we are the ones with the ability to solve them. Are our political institutions dysfunctional? Throw out the elite and elect new people. Is the quality of our lives and neighbourhoods deteriorating? Make the streets safe again by joining a local community group. Are we unable to find a good paying job or unlucky enough to be out of work? Network online. We don't need the elite, we need leaders, and they are all around if we look for them.

Unlike the leaderless, rudderless and solution-less protest movement Occupy Wall Street²²⁸ that has sprung up in a scattering of cities across North America, *new* leaders have emerged from the streets and emerging political parties in Europe²²⁹ the United States²³⁰ and Quebec.²³¹ Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois, Martine Desjardins and Leo Bureau-Blouin,²³² or the other youth leaders of the Western world today, are real people who are not artificially charismatic, shaped and cultivated through an artificial political process or built through media engineering with focus-group appeal, but are instead a group of leaders, believable in their genuine interest in the well-being of others, trustworthy in their ability to represent the values of freedom and democratic rights without fear that they too will become corrupt and their actions self-serving. The passion of the Indignant, whether in Spain, Greece, Ireland, Canada, the United Kingdom, or any other state where this awakening has occurred, fills others with ideas and a desire for "real democracy," for "direct democracy," fostering a feeling that there truly are new answers to old questions, and new questions with new possibilities.

Along with them, a whole new form of organization, communication and political structure is emerging. The Internet is filled with postings and websites that talk about this New Enlightenment. Forget the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph*, read the *Irish Times* and *New York Times* with a critical eye; the opinions of *Der Spiegel* or *Le Devoir* must be taken with a grain of salt. Don't waste your time listening to the establishment try and defend itself and its outdated rationale for its influence.

In this information environment of the elite, question the legitimacy of everything: from who should rightfully run the state in today's advanced technological world to how much power the individual should have over his or her own life; from where the line between private and public law should be drawn, to the role and use of today's technological innovations in the democratic process. For the elite who run the newspapers of the West, these and other like-minded questions have no play, for them everything revolves around

²²⁸ Although inspirational to the youth and economically disenfranchised, at the time of writing, this description of the movement is valid.

²²⁹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/nov/15/lessons-from-iceland-people-power>

²³⁰ <http://www.americanselect.org/>

²³¹ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/story/2012/06/05/quebec-students-montreal-festivals-rozon.html?cmp=rss>

²³² <http://www.globalnews.ca/canada/ex-student+leader+bureau-blouin+wins+pg+seat+to+become+youngest+ever+quebec+mna/6442708536/story.html>

money. It is time to rise above this word to other words that have far greater meaning, depth and importance.

It wasn't money that put people in the streets of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya or Syria; money was only the catalyst. The real reason was an individual awakening, the crossing of a spiritual and intellectual Rubicon of sorts. There are many more possibilities and ways of living worth fighting for than maintaining a status quo enforced by an out-of-touch and uncaring elite. It is this *truth* that we in the West must be conscious of if we are to change our societies for the better.

Facebook pages, blogs and websites devoted to this new intellectual awakening are where your time should be spent. Google words like *direct democracy*, *Indignant*, *Tea Party*, *Idle No More*,²³³ *NCAFC (National Campaign Against Fees & Cuts)*. These organizations offer the individual the opportunity to be involved in serious discussions about the future and how to make it better. If you are not near these groups, search for words like *citizen forums*, *citizen assemblies*, *political forums online*, *referendum*, *petition*. Participate in the debate. Bring people together. Start the conversation. All these search results are a whole new world of writing and thinking that set not only the tone of today but the agenda for tomorrow.

This New Enlightenment is a golden opportunity for those countries and societies that once shunned the ideas and principles of freedom in all its forms to reconnect with the path they abandoned so long ago. With the help of the Internet, other fields of study are opening up, with accessibility and peer review for all. Research papers are now published and read online.²³⁴ Publishing websites exist that allow each voice to be heard.²³⁵ What is most inspiring is that many who write within this New Enlightenment are well educated. But they are not the elite, the professional politician, the economist, the wealthy 1%, the professional political/climate activist,²³⁶ the European technocrat,²³⁷ the North American bureaucrat²³⁸ or the tenured academic, each in their own way holding onto what is left of the old regime, old ideas and old ways of thinking.

This is just the beginning. Even *philosophy* has become a word people are willing to look at again with interest, once banished to the hinterlands by an academic elite who spurned the idealism—the individual questioning—associated with the interpretation and the seemingly natural foundation of chaotic arguments and disjointed truths when compared to the tautology of ideology or science. Perhaps if we are lucky, in this New Enlightenment another group of thinkers will announce themselves like those who found the strength to open up new paths of insight and understanding in the 17th and 18th centuries.

²³³ <http://idlenomore.ca/>

²³⁴ <http://www.questia.com>

²³⁵ <http://www.scribd.com>

²³⁶ <http://www.thenation.com/article/164497/capitalism-vs-climate?page=full>

²³⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/16/italy-unveils-government-technocrats>

²³⁸ http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/money_co/2011/11/lawmakers-slam-fannie-mae-freddie-mac-ceos-over-pay-and-bonuses.html

Is there another Jean-Jacques Rousseau²³⁹ out there who can bring forth something as powerful as the *Social Contract*? Will another John Locke²⁴⁰ step forward with a work as important as the *Two Treatises of Government*? Will we in our time be afforded the opportunity to learn from a work as important as *Leviathan*?²⁴¹ How appropriate that would be in this time of rebellion and revolution. And what would Denis Diderot²⁴² say about Wikipedia if he were around today? Is there someone out there who can take this encyclopedia and improve upon it even further?

With the help of the Internet, today's spirit of change and a few brave men and women willing to bring forth new paths of insight and action, the New Enlightenment is an open door to an undiscovered country; a future where freedom, democracy, the individual and prosperity still exist; where people have control over the events in their lives and not merely their own household budgets.

And the Democratic Renaissance is just the vehicle to take us there.

²³⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau

²⁴⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke#List_of_major_works

²⁴¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Hobbes#Leviathan.

²⁴² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denis_Diderot.

THE DEMOCRATIC RENAISSANCE, A PATH FOR MORAL MEN AND WOMEN TO SUCCEED

Bridging the Ethical Void Between the Modern and Postmodern

The Great Economic Collapse of 2008 has revealed to all the depths to which our morally depraved Western society has fallen here in this no-man's-land between the modern and postmodern eras. The scourge of drugs; the need by many to inflict pain upon themselves through self-mutilation; self-loathing; debauchery; endless lies; narcissism; greed; criminality—once commonly thought of as mere *problems*—conveniently hidden from view by trillions of dollars, pounds and euros that lubricated the economic system and its eco-system: the truth has now been revealed with the destruction of all this capital...*these are not just problems.*

This is the modern legacy that the *elite* of the Western world have wrought upon us as individuals.

The elite, who find themselves addicted to these desires and attitudes, argue that this is just normal human behaviour. To disagree, you must respond that no matter how often you are exposed to the abnormal, it still does not make it normal!

Poverty, economic depression, systemic corruption, debt and insolvency are also called natural occurrences that cannot be eradicated.

Taken all together, this legacy will once again be our future, shaped by the elite of the Western world when the crisis has passed.

Cultivated in private schools and reinforced with indoctrination in their ivy league and “Golden Triangle” schools, passed down and force-fed to those in the lower classes by the media and well-intentioned teachers and bureaucratic administrators looking not to make waves lest they get fired and have to deal with the consequences of their actions by losing their place in line at the middle class trough of utopia, this legacy will end with millions abandoned in the ghettos and lost enclaves of the cities, rampant with drugs and crime; where freedom of speech involves writing “off with their heads!”²⁴³ on the wall next to the sign advertising the latest cell phone...

Many will do what is necessary rather than what is right.

The riots of London in the summer of 2011 exemplified the consequences that all must endure when those who lead know not where they are going. London burned not due to a case of lost morals or minds absent of values or principle. The world that the young inhabit today is encoded with a different understanding of right and wrong.

²⁴³ <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/3268159/Charles-Camillas-car-is-attacked-in-London-as-students-protest.html>

If you were to dissect and drill down into the meaning of the words and images that fill the heads of the brainwashed youth today, you would find one word to describe today's contemporary notion of truth and faith: *nothing*. Heads filled with images and words that ring hollow only create desperation and rage in the youth, who then become the dispirited poor and working poor.

Angered by the fact that their lives will amount to nothing when others have everything, realizing that they will never be allowed to live a fruitful and productive life before they die, knowing there is no contribution allowed them in today's society, they burned the future of *nothing* that awaits them.

It is not surprising that it is the lowest on that totem pole who are the sole voice of anger and frustration with the world today. The rest have been silenced by fear; fear of being ostracized at work; fear of the consequences of being un-politically correct; fear of losing a point on their credit score; fear of not getting that promotion if their true views are known; fear of not wanting to conscientiously recognize the soft tyranny that engulfs Western society and the nightmare our society has become.

Nothing was more patronizing of the ruling class than when Prince Charles and Camilla—two people who epitomize the term *living off the dole*, whose sole existence is predicated upon handouts by the public dime, who live for nothing except the past, a prince with more power than the people²⁴⁴—decided to visit the enclaves where the rioting was the worst! And the purpose of their visit? To give advice and assurance that the world is *just* and each gets what they deserve in life!

Even vice today is used as a weapon of the elite.

Corrupt everything and everyone, and it becomes impossible for those looking for a more just world to gain any traction. How can you say you want to get rid of drugs when you used them in high school, college, university? Try and you are called a hypocrite.

And the mainstream media only reinforce this absurd notion of progress.

You want to redistribute wealth to the poor? Impossible. You need to take a pay cut in your salary and pension, "Lead the way!" the right-wing media cry out, and a double standard is once again revealed. Only minds twisted in knots ethically and morally, without a shred of decency or care for their fellow human beings, could devise a stratagem of such deception, subterfuge and folly.²⁴⁵

At every turn in the Western world today, the common man and woman is confronted by a meaningless void; a sort of no-man's-land between two epochs; a nether world of neither-here-or-there, similar in design for everyone except the elite—their wealth,

²⁴⁴ Booth, Robert. Prince Charles has been offered a veto over 12 government bills since 2005. *The Guardian*. Oct. 10, 2011.

²⁴⁵ <http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/12/two-cheers-for-double-standards/?scp=7&sq=stanley%20fish&st=Search/StanleyFish>

privilege, power and class ensuring *their* children grow up as free individuals untouched and unhindered by this lack of moral clarity; ethical decay not eroding their building blocks of life.

A world so out of sorts that words and platitudes devised by focus groups and run by publicity agencies allow the devious and shrewd the opportunity to conceal their true identities; the English Defence League are advertised and presented as pure and innocent in intention, and morally comparable with agencies like Doctors Without Borders or Amnesty International.

Corruption, persons of ill repute²⁴⁶ and scoundrels are not a phenomenon unique to this era; politics has always had its fair share of shady characters; the media could not exist if it were not somewhat stacked with immoral and corrupt souls. But the problem today is not that there are those who fit this characterization, but that the system itself reinforces and rewards this behaviour. Like the sub prime mortgage debacle in America: incentives were given as a reward for fraudulent behaviour in regard to the issuance of mortgages; the ratings agencies S&P, Moody's and Fitch were paid to give triple AAA guarantees to financial junk.²⁴⁷

And let's not forget the ad nauseam cries of injustice from the beautiful and popular people over the legal plight of Roman Polanski, all but forgetting that he was a fugitive on the run, a felon convicted of sodomizing a 13-year-old girl.²⁴⁸

The question is not whether or not these people make mistakes or are prone to bad judgment, but whether or not the individual in question is a person of high moral character and integrity.

Ours is a world in which it is almost impossible to distinguish between those who wish to enslave us, corrupt our children's morals, or enlist us into their devious ideological schemes and policies, and those with genuine intentions who promise salvation with more freedom for the individual—a task made nearly impossible in today's political and intellectual ring-around-the-rosy.

There must be some way to tell friend from foe? The difference between a failed past and a prosperous future? The worn out ideas of the modern era and the possibility of postmodern salvation?

There is.

Those of unsavoury character will never campaign for *more* democracy. More importantly, democracy is the enemy of all forms of extremism; it curtails the amount of power any politician or group can wield; it neuters the religious zealot from imposing

²⁴⁶ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/french-investigators-studying-claims-that-strauss-kahn-involved-in-rape-in-washington-hotel/2012/05/04/gIQA7IyO1T_story.html?hpid=z3

²⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Credit_rating_agencies_and_the_subprime_crisis

²⁴⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Polanski#Sexual_assault_case

upon society ancient rites and out-of-place traditions; it offers the intellectual and academic the ability to search for truth.

How can you link a political system to the moral character of an individual? For too long we have ignored the actions of individuals and their respective outcomes. They are the only public display of intention that we can see—everything else is far removed from view to the backrooms, the private conversation with friends. The process of democracy is fundamentally a good thing for society; a nation can never have too much democracy. Therefore, the more democracy offered in a society, the better off both politically and morally the individual of that state should be.

For instance, those of questionable character and integrity will never respect the outcome of a referendum,²⁴⁹ aspire for the free election of judges, convene a constitutional convention that can implement “real democratic change” for the better,²⁵⁰ insist on a democratic foundation of all governing bodies in authority like economic councils or utility boards. The upper chamber of English democracy, the House of Lords, decided by election?²⁵¹ Forget it.

Don’t believe me? Just look at a recent column by George Monbiot:

*“This article is about one of those elsewheres. It is about the network of unelected committees, boards and commissions operating below the public radar, through which governments pursue the aims that weren’t disclosed in their manifestos. The people they appoint are an index to the interests they serve. To list them is to expose the gulf between what a government claims to be and what it is.”*²⁵²

And after laying out this injustice for all to see, acknowledging that the power of the state rests in the hands of the unelected, defined by the stylized mainstream media connotation of “the fair-minded and impartial appointee.” Does Mr. Monbiot, the most sanctimonious and righteous voice on the Left in the United Kingdom say that these political entities should be subject to the democratic process to fix this prejudice? No, not a word on this. He says that these entities need to be “*balanced*.”²⁵³

This answer of “balanced,” the progressive idea of “fairness,” the Green’s use of “sustainable,” the Liberal love of the words “transparency” or “openness,” the Conservative need for “accountability,” all strike at the very heart of our victimization at the hands of the elite; these terms and their application ensure our enslavement to the status quo. Power is in their hands, not ours.

²⁴⁹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/5579684/Ireland-to-hold-second-referendum-on-Lisbon-Treaty.html>

²⁵⁰ <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2012/0510/1224315844103.html/> Donncha O’Connell

²⁵¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/apr/23/lords-reform-cameron-downplays-referendum>

²⁵² Monbiot, George. Britain’s Shadow Government: unelected, unbalanced and unaccountable. *The Guardian*. Mar. 13, 2012.

²⁵³ Ibid.

Why does Mr. Monbiot not champion the democratic process? Only he can answer for himself, but my guess is that if he were to advocate for more democracy, that paycheque of his would stop finding its way into his bank account; his books would never again find a publisher; his children would be found unacceptable for the good schools. Thus, his greed and want for himself is placed at a higher premium than more political freedom for the rest of us. The common man and woman can only see this as a moral failure of the individual that calls himself George Monbiot, a man who profits at the expense of the rest by maintaining the status quo. The defense of this democratic deficit is implicit if you find yourself part of the elite. The status quo allows for the deviant, immoral and unethical to thrive, regardless of whether you sit on the fence, or find yourself on the Left or Right of the political spectrum.²⁵⁴

The upper and middle class facilitators of this system who enjoy similar profit from the status quo enjoin us to maintain this injustice. They do not want us to participate in citizen assemblies or petition for public initiatives or term limits, representative recalls, balanced budgets amendments, etc., etc. Instead, they offer the alternative vote or proportional representation; neither are reforms of democracy, but rather simple changes to election laws.

This is how to begin the process of discovering who is morally and ethically corrupt in this frenzied mass media, upside-down world. Advocacy for more democracy is the Achilles heel of those who covet power for themselves and their select friends—and so we get a glimpse of their immoral character. Direct democracy and its implementation would be the mausoleum in which the unjust would forever be entombed with neither power nor privilege.

For those who do believe in the Enlightenment ideals of an epoch past, in a society that acknowledges the insight of the Cardinal virtues, the difference between right and wrong, the axiom that money and power corrupt the soul, a social contract that shuns and punishes pleonexia—we must advocate for anything but the status quo so as not to wander a never-ending life in the political wilderness, allowing the elite to squelch our desire to live free. Inaction and silence inadvertently feed our foes lust for control and a collective right to power. Not questioning the status quo or demanding more democracy ends with the subordination of our rights as individuals to live free of the soft tyranny and systematic oppression that exists in the Western world today.

The New Enlightenment and the Democratic Renaissance is the postmodern path for us...we shall be victims no more!

Now, the Democratic Renaissance and the New Enlightenment are *not* a panacea for all that ails Western society. But they are a start to something better. Not only would they allow insight into the true moral and ethical characters of those who wish to lead or seek power, they initiate a new path of political, economic and ethical empowerment for the individual that the current system abrogates; a new relationship between all citizens, one of unlimited opportunity and personal growth; a social empowerment for the many, not

²⁵⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_parliamentary_expenses_scandal

the few; ethical and moral liberty from state-defined vice and safety; a society that never refuses freedom in all its forms for those who make up the bulk of the Western world: the poor, working poor and middle class.

Never forget the sleaze of the phone hacking scandal in England;²⁵⁵ Jimmy Savile;²⁵⁶ the cause of the Great Economic Collapse; the institutionalized pedophile of the Catholic Church²⁵⁷—those who count themselves as the elite today have shown themselves to be rotten to the core. The problems of our society are not the result of flaws within *us*—the poor, the working poor and the middle class—but it *is* found in them: the elite.

²⁵⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2012/mar/13/rebekah-brooks-arrested-phone-hacking-investigation>

²⁵⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20632125>

²⁵⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10407559>

SECTION IV: A POSTMODERN POLITICS: PRIMARY DEMOCRACY

“Some form of association must be found as a result of which the whole strength of the community will be enlisted for the protection of each person and property of each constituent member, in such a way that each, when united to his fellows, renders obedience to his own will, and remains as free as he was before.”

The Social Contract
Jean Jacques Rousseau

Introduction

Today the individual of the Western world stands at a crossroads in human history. Everywhere one turns today, there is dissatisfaction with everything modern. The early modernism that ushered in the High Renaissance had profound implications and added meaning to life, but today, one is hard pressed to see the impact of such genius that was the driving force behind the minds of those who wrote, painted and sculpted their way into history. The Reformation, a byproduct of modern thinking, stands out as a warning, still ignored, of man's continuing Fall: church pews are empty, both Catholic and Protestant; there is a fracturing of the soul and an ever-refashioning of self-image, a centrifuge of spinning parts never made whole, and the idea of marriage and family has fallen out of favour.

In many respects, we still remain chained to the consequences of some of the modern period's most unwanted aspects. Modern colonialism added very little to the whole of the society who conquered, and even less to those who had to live under foreign rule: power, liberty and like-minded principles were extended only to their compatriots and descendants, the wealth and resources of new lands filling the coffers of the European bourgeois elite while the conquered received nothing. Modern Social Darwinism and its ethos of competition between nations, people and business was said to be the golden path to prosperity and would bring the world out of poverty, but ended instead in a Great Depression and a second World War. Contemporary modernism has left the individual devoid of ideas and without a reliable path to traverse the future, a path founded upon the half-truths and lies of ideology. The modern ideal of communism, as exemplified by the Soviet Union, collapsed under its own weight of tyranny and oppression. And the demise of late modernism—which had its early beginnings with the wonders of the Industrial Revolution and its wealth of employment and opportunity—has now given way to the Information Age, the last step in the modern staircase of achievement, typified by a world of automation and unemployment for millions.

Today's mass citizen of the West, a byproduct of modernism, walks aimlessly through the present, unsure of who they are, their lives not their own to define. And how can they? When the foundational documents and treaties of the European Union are more attuned to the nomenclature surrounding the issue of carbon emissions, regulating and chaining individual human activity to an appropriate use of carbon than preserving ideas linked with modern individual liberties, heartless documents devoted to the ideas of

monetarism and socialist unionism, promising nothing for those searching for identity and meaning in their lives.

Then there is the repackaging of the old as new: the idea of modern capitalism, another ideological invention given new life and marketed as International Investment Law. Yet it too has faltered, sacrificed in 2008 with the Great Economic Collapse and taking the foundation of modern capitalism with it; a banking sector in the West on life support today only with the help of Western government bailouts in the billions. National economies supported by their treasuries through the printing of trillions in new currency; anemic economic growth passed off as a recovery. Seven years on and the gullibility of the common man and woman has already passed beyond its most sane outer limits. The result? A modern society immersed in negative social cohesion dynamics (today's politically correct wording).

In the language of 1776, it would translate to revolution and rebellion.

But most disturbing of all, modernity's greatest project—the teachings and philosophy of the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason, as some call it—has come up against a great insurmountable wall. For many of the elite in the West, individual emancipation has once again become a problem. Perhaps not coincidentally, many of today's elite continue to look to communist China as the proper model for doing business, and admire their ability to get things done without consultation or regulation. Democracy is disdained for the same reasons it was by the King of England in 1688; despised by Louis XVI in his day; forgotten on the field in Flanders in 1914; crushed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz in 1944; obliterated by the Soviets in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and again in the Prague Spring of 1968.

For those who believe in a world of Ideas and Reason, facts and arguments are now worthless: only *accepted* science will do. Many of the elite of the Western world claim that all of life bends to physical law, and with the proper sociological methodology, so too will politics and the individual; it is just a matter of time before the physical laws of man's various ways will be illuminated, and fact and evidence will guide our way forward. But this new role for science is not founded in an open and free scientific lab, at a private university or research foundation, but rather one that can be properly controlled through ideology and the corporation. Further, accepted facts and laws will come into being through government financed research. In all instances achievement will be measured by the yardstick of profit and control, not the applied effect or intellectual worth of what is discovered. It would seem then, here in the 21st century, the possibility of participating in the unfinished project of modernity, the Enlightenment—and the quest for understanding Truth—has come to an end.

Considering that the modern era is now over 500 years old, perhaps this malaise should not come as a great surprise. The fact that it is over is not the problem: it is the hangover of the modern era that causes the most difficulty, in this our 21st century. Unlike Darwin's theory of evolution—survival of the fittest species, natural selection and de-selection and the removal and extinction of all that is unwanted or unfit—man, even with

his great intellect, has unfortunately not been able to master this most crucial step of progress: the ability to walk away from the past or present to the as-yet-unborn future free of any physical or intellectual chain of bondage, real or imagined.

As evidence of this fact, the 19th century—supposedly long written into the history books—still feeds into today’s politics. The outdated political institution of representational democracy is still imbued with such issues as whether the fundamental underpinning of society belongs in public or private hands, of the proper limitations of liberty and what constitutes a basic human right, of the false ideological argument that individual rights can only be protected with collective action, and of the usefulness of labour unions and their integral place within the economy. All these contribute to the everlasting hangover, fueling our distorted intellectual, academic and political debates.

There is a feeling that *the old* permeates everything, a sense that forging any future innovation or progress is stifled by past inconsistencies, a need to fight the same battles over and over again, and victories of the past are beholden to the same vanquished arguments of days gone by.

Canadians and citizens of the European Union are faced with a world where freedom, democracy, human rights founded on the supremacy of the individual, the right of religious expression and economic prosperity are all now in continuous decline. Even in the United States and Switzerland—countries that have been able to accrue tremendous and continuous advances in expanding 17th and 18th century Enlightenment freedoms—people are facing a sudden and noticeable stagnation in both individual liberty and economic prosperity.

The universalism of a human right that was so prevalent in the middle of the 20th century, and offered such hope and promise in bringing people of various cultures and backgrounds together, has become mired in quicksand, held fast by stagnant modern definitions of culture and identity. From something once defined by the fundamental, and based upon individual universal characteristics and determining factors, many now call for rights that make no intellectual sense in an intellectual debate of hope and change. Human rights and the idea of human dignity have been overtaken by modern definitions of group prejudice, fabricated ethical malice and invented political tyranny.

Today, the idea of modern collective and economic rights still dominate the political discussion in the postmodern West today. The idea of a human right remains a tool of ideology that offers protection only to those who agree with others of a similar attitude. To be free from hate speech, climate justice and “cognitive diversity” are now talked about in society, without regard to individual rights. These are just but a few examples of the worn-out and discredited modern ideas, shaped by ideology that have created the intellectual void the West has fallen into.

This prevailing attitude concerning the need to “think collectively” is all too real. Democracy, that central pillar of sovereignty that was the foundation of ancient Greece and our early modern times for which millions gave their life in order to ensure its

enduring flame, has now become an ever-growing centralized governing authority no matter where one lives.

In Europe, this consolidated power directs the lives of over 300 million. A power slowly compiled over the past 60 years with the undemocratic European Union sitting in Brussels, and technocratic governments in Italy²⁵⁸ and Greece.²⁵⁹ In Canada, a parliamentary majority governs with the consent of only 39% of the popular vote,²⁶⁰ and the United States of America, the greatest and most open forum of representational democratic debate the world has ever known, is now beset by political gridlock: partisan bickering between two entrenched establishment political parties, each beholden to that country's elite.

No matter who sits in our modern representative legislatures of the West, it is nearly impossible to change or challenge the establishment. To make matters worse, the Great Economic Collapse has only hastened the political will of the elite to consolidate power in the hands of organizations and political groups out of reach of the common man and woman. Democracy is all but forgotten now.

It would seem the institutions and the political system of today have become what the aristocracy of the past once was: a world of systemic oppression and soft tyranny. Today's version is gentler and kinder, though, manufactured in marketing and publicity departments, but nonetheless a systematic subjugation of the masses. There is no escape from the welfare trap for the working poor, and for the middle class, no chance to pass on wealth and property to their children.

This new elite of the 21st century sits together at the best restaurants, vacations at the best villas around the world, shops in Abu Dhabi, London, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. This group atop society in terms of wealth and power rule almost as if it were a birthright; they wield their power in a closed system that offers little possibility of change or future empowerment to the majority of people who today find themselves powerless.

So how does the common man and woman regain control over their lives in today's world of ever-increasing economic competition and politically oppressive state legislation? The answers put forward in the past aren't applicable any longer.

As recent history has shown, the way power is held and how it has been distributed over the last hundred years is far different now than in any period of human history. Some today look to international treaties or the United Nations as an avenue for progress or salvation, utopian solutions that consist of binding treaties to trump sovereign states and constitutions, a global democracy that has no electorate and is subservient to the rules and regulations of International Investment Law. But the United Nations is now what The

²⁵⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15762791>

²⁵⁹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/11/world/europe/greece-and-italy-ask-technocrats-to-find-solution.html?pagewanted=all>

²⁶⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_federal_election,_2011

League of Nations²⁶¹ was prior to the Second World War: a failed modern institution. It can offer no real solution...it is part of the problem.

Today the United Nations is nothing more than a fool's paradise, having repeatedly shown over the years that, as a closed diplomatic and political debating society for the world's elite, it too has succumbed to the worst moral characteristics and ideological pathologies that consume the Western mind: from the fraud committed in the oil for food program of the late 1990s²⁶² to U.N. soldiers introducing cholera to Haiti ²⁶³ after the devastating earthquake of 2010, from the endless problems with the United Nations Human Rights Council²⁶⁴ and its inability to bring forth a solution to the killing of the Syrian people at the hands of their own government under the direction of the dictator Bashar Al Assad,²⁶⁵ it is clear the United Nations does not hold all the answers.

It will be necessary, then, to look elsewhere for our salvation.

The Democratic Renaissance: Pointing the Way to a New Era of Enlightenment

As the people of the Western world continue to deal with the devastating consequences of the Great Economic Collapse of 2008—lost jobs, skyrocketing food prices, mortgages worth more than their homes—the wealthy and influential of Europe continue to increase their economic and political power. From Athens, Greece to Zagreb, Croatia, those who are responsible for building the European Union into a continent-wide political confederation have only hastened the pace to see the project completed, all under the guise of never letting a good crisis go to waste.

In America, the media have all but forgotten that in 2013 nearly 48 million people in the United States are now using food stamps, a number that represents a surge of nearly 70% since 2008.²⁶⁶ Even more disturbing, millions more have been uncharacteristically moved out of the workforce and onto government programs of support like welfare, Social Security and disability pensions.²⁶⁷

Certainly there has been a great outcry from those who have been affected the most by this catastrophe; the way power is being consolidated is well acknowledged by the powerless of today's Western world. Yet, the push-back by those with only a voice in the world has been, in some cases, dramatic. From the Tea Party in America to the surge in direct democracy organizations in Europe to the rise of the "Indignant" and various other political movements in Western Europe, the youth of today see the reality of the world

²⁶¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Nations

²⁶² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil-for-Food_Programme

²⁶³ <http://www.cdc.gov/haiticholera>

²⁶⁴ <http://www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/bitstreams/12883.pdf>

²⁶⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17683705>

²⁶⁶ <http://money.msn.com/now/post.aspx?post=e9caf453-75ca-4ad6-ae9d-9b991cd6702f>

²⁶⁷ <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/03/disability-insurance-americas-124-billion-secret-welfare-program/274302/>

around them. Theirs is a lost future, an open question mark stretching into the horizon, one with little chance of a career, family or economic security.

Their right to a prosperous, open, democratic and free society is under attack; the last cornerstones of yesterday's individual liberty and democratic rights are slowly being signed away in treaties, bailout agreements, and now bail-ins that disregard the laws surrounding private property, allowing the confiscation of funds from bank accounts.

Yet despite the setbacks and loss of momentum in the past two years for those looking for a society that offers more democracy and freedom, for those searching for a Democratic Renaissance—born in the deserts and cities of North Africa and the Middle East, and which then carried itself forth across the Mediterranean Sea and infected the young people in the European Union, where they too realized that more democracy and freedom was required—there remains today a growing wave of discontent building within the youth in countries like Ireland, Greece, Iceland, Spain and Portugal, everywhere young people continue to stand in the streets clamoring for change, demanding to see more Real Democracy²⁶⁸ in their lives and in their sovereign nation states.

But instead of fostering and encouraging this discontent and channeling it into positive political reforms, many who dwell in the few remaining brick-and-mortar established newspapers have taken up writing about the demise of the Democratic Renaissance, their prose and talking points already describing an end. Democracy has failed to take root in Egypt they write; the Assad regime remains, its family hereditary power structure in Syria intact; the elite of Europe reminding the rest that the status quo in Europe remains for good reason, that “the people understand that it is necessary to submit to austerity and those who implement it.” In their opinion, this is the only way of ensuring a prosperous future.²⁶⁹

Those who write and see the world through this myopic lens falsely expect the world to change completely in only three years! But what other attitude can be expected from those who make a living keeping the status quo of security and good government here in the West?

For those who scribble their way to a paycheck from the elite, this denouement of democratic rebellion and revolution cannot come quick enough. The words that stream forth from the tips of their pens and the frantic tapping of fingers on Blackberries are only there to reinforce the status quo, a firewall to protect 70 years of political organizing and power sharing amongst the elite of this world. For them, the spilling of blood, replacing the old with the new—*hope itself*—are just political slogans to be dutifully followed to the ballot box.

To these people who are the foundation and architects of today's mass citizen in the West, I say “your world in print and television still crumbles; the Democratic Renaissance and the revolution still continues!” The Democratic Renaissance is not

²⁶⁸ <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/05/20115267575844603.html>

²⁶⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/22/eurozone-merkel-idUSL5N0D92AS20130422>

merely a apolitical phase, but rather harbours something deeper, both in political thought and experiment. The modern status quo that is the current power structure here in the Western world is giving way to a new era.

Western youth continue to emphasize the need to address issues of human bondage, freedom and prosperity; in their eyes, the political system of representative democracy will not work for their tomorrow. By design it fails them and their needs, and, in their minds, the problem of legitimacy cannot be shaken from its roots. From their perspective, Westerners are dealing with a 19th century interpretation of power and a system of politics that produces only societal inequalities.

It is clear to the youth that this injustice is housed within the institution of modern representational democracy, which is dysfunctional in its ability to solve problems, is corrupt with ideology and social engineering thoughts,²⁷⁰ and is bloated with bureaucracy that makes the delivery of services untimely, costly and inefficient. Its uneven treatment of those before the law, and the outcomes of economic opportunity and success that are dependent upon one's place on the economic ladder, are all too much to bear anymore.

As John Keane writes in *The Life and Death of Democracy*, "The new democracy demands a head shift, a break with conventional thinking, an almighty wrestle with words and meanings in order to understand its political geography."²⁷¹ Only by pursuing fundamental change within this system of power can other systems like the economic and legal system of the state be healed and reformed to once again place the interests of the individual above the supremacy of collective rights, and eliminate the overarching need for profit before humanity.

Already in this renaissance, a new democracy is slowly being brought forth, not only by the youth in the streets of the European Union and Canada, but through a reengagement of all people in the democratic process itself. Everywhere one turns, if one looks hard enough, the people of the West are slowly showing the way forward. Not only through efficient ways of protesting—turning the power of protest into real political power in the institutions of the state—but also through effective ways of doing away with the modern problems of politics and power.

After the great collapse in Iceland, the people spoke and their voices were heard by their elected representatives. The government fell and a new, more attuned group of representatives came to power, creating an environment for greater political accountability and participation. The bankers who caused this great catastrophe have been prosecuted and jailed.²⁷² A new constitution has been drafted by a constitutional

²⁷⁰ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_engineering_\(political_science\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_engineering_(political_science))

²⁷¹ Keane, John. *Life and Death of Democracy*. Part Three Monitory Democracy. 2009. p. 697.

²⁷² http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/03/world/europe/iceland-prosecutor-of-bankers-sees-meager-returns.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

assembly formed by an elected panel from the people. It awaits ratification in the legislature.²⁷³

In Reykjavik, Mayor Jon Gnarr and his followers are blazing a new trail in the uncharted territory of “digital democracy.”²⁷⁴ From their digital platform, citizens have been able to participate in every step of the democratic process. Citizens can “like” policy ideas, make budget decisions and vote on micro-issues affecting their neighbourhoods.²⁷⁵

In the United States, the Tea Party continues to exert influence within the House of Representatives. Despite an election cycle that saw the defeat of many Republican candidates for Congress from the socially-conservative wing of the party in 2012, the Tea Party itself continues to retain a strong and unified core of elected members, ensuring that the Tea Party wing of the Republicans will still retain a defining role in the mid-term elections of 2014.

But perhaps the greatest victory so far of this new Democratic Renaissance comes from Italy; the irony of this should not escape anyone, since it was in Florence, Italy, where the modern Renaissance was born. And here, under the tutelage of an outlandish comedian by the name of Beppe Grillo,²⁷⁶ the first concrete brick in the path to a new democracy was put into place. Through his energy and guidance, along with that of the hundreds of thousands who stood with him in the piazza, and the hundreds of thousands of others in their homes in front of their computer screens and cell phones, and their novel use of social media and the Internet, they created their own primaries and elected their own representatives to stand in the election, calling themselves the Five Star Movement.²⁷⁷

From this group a new power was born in Italian politics, forever changing the dynamics of power in that country. Using social media and the Internet, the foundation of Italian politics was successfully undermined—without, it might be added, the need for large sums of money or backroom political deals. This new use of social media and the Internet has created an open door into the modern representative legislature for those who have been shut out for decades; it is a method that can be replicated everywhere in the Western world.

Yet despite these examples of minimal political success and revolution here in the early part of the 21st century, the answers that are supposed to offer *power* to those in the streets and the disenfranchised who protest silently in their homes remains unattainable. These few solutions and political victories ring hollow with the failures of modernity; even though access has been granted to the representational legislature, the people are suddenly confronted with the past in the structure of the modern state and the form of

²⁷³ <http://www.newsoficeland.com/home/politics/parliamentministries/item/957-iceland-will-not-get-the-new-constitution-this-term-no-agreement-in-parliament>

²⁷⁴ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/25/reykjavik-mayor-digital-democracy>

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beppe_Grillo

²⁷⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Star_Movement

power it wields. The future requires something different; there are fundamental structural problems within the modern Western government.

A Kinship with our Western Political Past Resurfaces

Power in the modern era has always been centred on things that were easily accessible. In the period of time that ushered in the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, power revolved around the control of land and resources, which were controlled by an out-of-touch elite. The masses were kept from taking the reins that directed their lives. Until, that is, they decided to act to change this situation.

The protest and rebellion seen in the streets today has created a kinship with our ancestors, a connection to a past that has been specifically expunged from many history books, replaced with the edicts and values of today's mass citizen. Yet, whether it be on the streets of Madrid, Lisbon, or Montreal, this distant memory has not been forgotten by those in the streets, and a relationship has been rekindled and restored.

Oh, how invigorating it is to protest! For those who have never left the street they live on, and headed down to the city centre with signs that state in a multitude of unique and different ways **I Will Not Be Ignored—You Do Not Know What You Miss**. How unburdening is this simple action for the soul. Showing the elite that *you* exist, that there is power and strength not only in numbers, but in the individual; it frees the mind to experience hope and opens your eyes to the possibilities of tomorrow. It also shows that each of us has power and that no one is insignificant; everyone has something to contribute.

Suddenly, here in the 21st century, the words *individual emancipation* have once again passed the lips of millions in the West. It goes beyond the simple right of being heard; the street has shown once again that its power still overrules any contrived or illegitimate system of control by any elite, if the people so choose. This rings as true today for those who march in Greece, Italy, Spain, and Quebec as it did for those who stormed the Bastille.

The Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries was not built around the concept of "we." The king, the monarchy, and the aristocracy worked collectively. For the peasants in the streets, for those without privilege or without hope, there was just the singular: the individual. And as the writers of the Enlightenment pointed out so eloquently, only within the realm of the individual exists prosperity, democracy, and freedom. With this as the foundation of society for each individual, *all* prosper according to their talents and abilities.

Before the uprising in the streets as a result of the Great Economic Collapse, the modern Western world was tilted into unbalance. We had long forgotten the lessons of our past; ideology had replaced the narrative of individual emancipation and infused everything with a mischievous narrative of sameness and collective understanding and experience.

The project of freedom that Professor Israel describes as Enlightenment no longer existed for those who live in the European Union and Canada. Everything in these lands is bound and belongs to an idea of “we.” There are no more individuals; everything on the Internet is *crowd*-sourced, using the world wide web revolves around the use of *social* media.

But as the protests continue to evolve, and our use of the Internet within the context of this revolution grows, it is possible to actually see that the pillars that support the modern power structure of today’s Western democracies have become diverse and convoluted, existing within many intertwining systems of power, accumulated land and wealth being only one aspect. Information is now as valuable as the dirt the farmer plows; knowledge has created a new power of authority over those less informed and connected.

I ask you, “What is more powerful than someone standing on the street corner airing past grievances?” Only that same person standing on that same street corner raising their voice in support of new ideas and new ways!

The fundamental problem standing in the way of reform and solutions is that those who are demanding change have not been presented with anything but old ideas. It is time to not only walk away from our failing, outdated, and outmoded modern political past and explore the future once again, but to build the intellectual foundation of this undiscovered country upon a foundation of intellectual and academic thought free of the incongruities, complexities and structural barriers of modern thought.

The time has come to make the discernible decision to move forward with the new, fully embracing a change that functions on a new political and philosophical paradigm. The postmodern era and its intellectual insights and solutions no longer await us over some distant horizon, today they are within the grasp of each of us in the West. This new era offers the opportunity to not only complete the unique, modern project of the search for truth, but also promises to move us forth into a new and dynamic path of postmodern Enlightenment.²⁷⁸

***A Postmodern Philosophy of Politics – Sapare Aude*²⁷⁹**

What many do not realize is that postmodernism²⁸⁰ has been with us for a good number of years now. Should you ever walk into an art gallery and be confronted with a video installation by Alex Poruchnyk,²⁸¹ or be confounded by a piece of conceptual art from Ha Schult or Barbara Kruger, you would be in a postmodern art world.²⁸² Even in literature one can easily find the muse of postmodernism at work. The work of David Eggers is

²⁷⁸ Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minesota. 1984. p. 72.

²⁷⁹ Dare to know.

²⁸⁰ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/postmodernism/>

²⁸¹ <http://www.videopool.org/catalogue/artists/?id=282>

²⁸² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postmodern_art

postmodern storytelling, or if you prefer something a little more academic, you can flip the pages of a David Foster Wallace novel.²⁸³

Postmodernism is a driving force in everything from art and film to architecture and psychology. Yet in many faculties within academia, it has been confronted by increasing resistance, academics and intellectuals preferring to remain cloistered amongst their modern ideas, methodologies, and paradigms, preferring to re-examine the problems of today through the paradoxes and enigmas that surround modern thought. Nowhere have these barricades been erected higher, reinforced and strengthened to keep postmodernism out, than in the realm of philosophy and political science.

It is a well known fact that in many Anglo-American academic circles, political philosophy has long been a dormant field of inquiry. Instead of producing relevant works of research or introspection, creating the foundational concepts needed to further the field, political philosophy today has been caught in the minefield of analytical philosophy.²⁸⁴ In the desire to understand what can be expressed as true within the work of any given philosopher, many have forgotten about the search for truth, creating a causal impact upon what is researched and what is not.

The political science departments of today's universities make it evident that they have shied away from ground-breaking, forward-looking research, preferring to detail and outline existing systems of governance firmly rooted in modern traditions. There is little, if any, in the way of research or published works that looks seriously at the limited democracy of the parliamentary system or how to remove the inherent corruption found within representational democracy. Instead, statistics and methodology—once the tools used in understanding the realm of politics—have themselves become the curriculum.

One of the great consequences of this intractable position of adhering to the modern status quo in the political science departments of our Western universities is their refusal to acknowledge that modern capitalism and International Investment Law have now acquired *political power*. In this modern perspective, capitalism and the free market must remain captive to the realm of economics, viewed solely in terms of regulation, business modeling and profit, taught by the economist and administered by the self-correcting market.

Another consequence of reinforcing this modern status quo is that the core concepts found within political philosophy—liberty, justice, property, human rights, and the rule of law—remain unaltered from their original form; many still range-bound to the definitions of a bygone era, maintaining their definition since their birth during the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries. And this despite the fact that we here in the 21st century no longer live in a modern world.

It is this ice jam of intellectual thought amongst the leaders, academics, and intellectuals of our time that needs to be broken before we in the West can continue forward into the

²⁸³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Foster_Wallace

²⁸⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analytic_philosophy

future. Immanuel Kant viewed the idea or the term Enlightenment as man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the ability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in the lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. Dare to Know!²⁸⁵

From this foundation that Kant so eloquently described, and despite an effort to thwart the postmodernism of our politics, one can see the beginnings of a great thaw in the minds of the youth and some academics here in the West. This need to know, to look for the new, to understand the inherent problems of modern political thought, and create workable solutions that are outside the box of modern thought, is the foundation and driving force of postmodern Enlightenment.

***Postmodern Political Enlightenment:
Rethinking the Modern Problems of Paradox, Contradiction and Ideology***

This new philosophy is aided by the technical aspect that postmodernism brings to the discussion; an environment and atmosphere created by the ground-breaking work of academics like Jurgen Habermass and his vision of a "noise free," transparent, fully communicational society,²⁸⁶ or Lyotard and his focus on the status of science and technology, of technocracy and the control of knowledge and information today.²⁸⁷

Primary democracy, born out of this postmodern political philosophy, builds upon the foundation that these intellectuals forged, and complements their work by introducing ideas and concepts like the *digital estate* and *postmodern natural law and legislation* to the debate, bringing to the discussion a new perspective of politics, creating a new postmodern political philosophy.

From John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* and Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*, to John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, primary democracy attempts to construct a new, workable, postmodern political platform to tackle the modern problem that is encountered within these works, and all human affairs, as we are confronted by the paradoxical.²⁸⁸

Of particular interest in this work are those paradoxes that fit into the realm of the political, such as the dividing line between private liberties and civic autonomy, human rights and public law, or the interplay between private law and modern, natural law. The issue of paradox—perhaps no more eloquently described as in Rousseau's *Social Contract* quoted at the beginning of this section—revolves around the needs of the community versus the freedom of the individual. Modern political philosophy to this day

²⁸⁵ <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>

²⁸⁶ Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minnesota. 1984. p. vii

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. viii

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

continues to treat the two as two separate and distinct entities, each with its own requirements, boundaries, and areas of influence.

Primary democracy breaks free from this modern political paradox of placing *all power* either within the realm of the individual or with society itself. Also, by redefining political concepts like *state* and *government*,²⁸⁹ *modern law* and *postmodern natural law*, *private and public autonomy*, primary democracy tackles the problems found in modern political philosophy without having to introduce ideology or competing forms of utopian schemes.

More importantly, it forcefully brings forward the question of individual emancipation, addressing the modern problem posited by the social contract of “How much authority can the state exercise over the individual?” with a question redefined as “What authority does the individual bequeath the state in this new postmodern composition and foundation?”

In the first section, *Primary Democracy: What is it? Postmodern Government in the 21st Century: Democratic, Direct, Digital (D³)*, the overall structure of primary democracy is laid out. From a philosophical conception and foundation of the idea itself to the practical participation of the individual in the deliberative and legislative process, the entire postmodern structure of primary democracy is methodically exposed for the reader.

Within the section itself, primary democracy is broken down into two main components: on the one hand the philosophical foundation of primary democracy and on the other, its pragmatic and practical construction. The first three essays of this section tackle the philosophical foundation of primary democracy as it exists when viewed through a postmodern interpretation of John Locke’s work, *The Two Treatises of Government*. The two remaining essays discuss in great detail the practical components needed to ensure that a workable structure is in place, such that the promise found in a postmodern concept like primary democracy can be realized.

Specifically, in “The Digital Estate, its Creation and Shared Symmetry with Locke’s State of Nature,” the link is made between today’s postmodernism and yesterday’s modern political foundation. In particular, the digital estate is broadly defined and linked with John Locke’s interpretation of the “original state of nature.”

In the second essay, “The ‘Digital Estate’ and a Separation of Powers: Looking Beyond Montesquieu,” a new postmodern power structure is built around the work of the legal scholar Bruce Ackerman, a fundamental necessity for an idea like primary democracy to function.

In the third essay, “A Postmodern Theory of Natural Right and Law, and the Establishment of the Democratic Digital Assembly,” the modern idea of a natural and equal right of all men and women to be free is introduced as the main philosophical concept that underpins not only any modern political structure but also serves as the

²⁸⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_philosophy#European_Age_of_Enlightenment

junction of all postmodern political philosophy as well. This shared political “pivot point” then serves as a bridge between the concepts of modern individual sovereignty and postmodern natural law. Once this foundation is sufficiently illuminated, the essay once again looks to John Locke for inspiration when examining the issues of political delegation and individual autonomy. With a nod to *The Two Treatises of Government*, a postmodern interpretation of these issues is explored, and the postmodern political institution of the democratic digital assembly is introduced.

In the fourth essay of this section, “The Democratic Digital Assembly Supported by Public Reason and a Digital Political Forum,” the pragmatic and practical requirements of primary democracy are discussed. Specifically, the political institutions of primary democracy, the democratic digital assembly and the digital political forum are constructed.

Looked upon from an exterior perspective, this fourth essay explores the link between Jurgen Habermas’s Theory of Communicative Action and the postmodern concept of the digital estate. In particular, the essay focuses upon those shared elements found in both Habermas’s theory and the concept of primary democracy. From an internal perspective, the essay discusses in detail the internal structure of both the democratic digital assembly and the digital political forum, focusing on the reliance of each upon the idea of public reason, as brought forth by John Rawls in his various academic works.

This fourth essay concludes with an investigation of the most recent research showing how today’s Internet, a component of the postmodern digital estate, is used politically, offering statistical evidence and interpretative fact, showing just how close the Western world is to actually realizing and utilizing a postmodern idea like primary democracy.

The final essay of this section, “Primary Democracy, the Digital Citizen and *Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto*” serves as an overall concluding discussion for all that has been talked about in the previous essays. It brings together all major structural aspects of primary democracy, offering the reader the opportunity to see what a postmodern government that takes the form of primary democracy actually looks like.

The remainder of the essays found within Section IV concentrate on reinforcing, further defining, and expanding upon the many political ideas, concepts and political structures put forth in the initial chapter, “Primary Democracy What is it? Government in the 21st Century: Democratic, Direct, Digital (D³).”

With the postmodern context of primary democracy firmly established, “The Foundation of Civilized Society: Law” looks at the unique political dance between the postmodern concept of natural law and legislation, and the three foundational elements of Western society: law; justice and democracy. With the power that the representative once used as his or her sole possession now redistributed, and a new postmodern foundational pillar in place to determine the direction of the state (and, by extension, all those who live and dwell within the nation), there is a need to further examine certain attributes particular to the idea of postmodern natural law and legislation.

It is here that primary democracy begins the task of setting down the parameters of this new governing authority of “postmodern natural law and legislation.” The essay examines in great detail just what the parameters of postmodern natural law and postmodern natural legislation could be. The essay further explores these parameters against the definition of other modern forms of law, from both legal and moral perspectives, such as criminal law, family law and the issue of contract law.

The idea of postmodern natural legislation serves as the jumping off point for, and introduction to, the foundational difference between modern interpretations of justice and its postmodern equivalent: *individual social obligation*.

From there, the essay looks at the paradox formed by the political concepts of private and public autonomy, offering up a postmodern interpretation of these two political entities, and a possible solution that overcomes earlier boundaries and barriers of power, influence, and responsibility. Finally, this essay looks into the possible structure of a postmodern judicial system that can properly handle and integrate all the interplay between postmodern natural law and legislation with this new area of jurisprudence.

One aspect of creating this new postmodern government structure is that it then becomes necessary to understand how the individual interacts with his or her fellow citizens in this new postmodern form of government. “The Natural Meaning Found Within the Individual Expressed Through the Nation” attempts to formulate a new social contract, a General Will once previously constructed as a modern collective idea and defined by a power-superstructure in group dynamics like politics, religion, or law is now discussed as one that reflects today’s postmodern, individual-manifested appearance.

Within this chapter, primary democracy is shown to redefine the General Will in a postmodern philosophical context, distilling it down to its truest and purest form—one that sees the General Will as individually driven, coupled with a responsive structure that ignores the visible modern idea of collective rights, and neutralizes the ideological concentration of identity with community, ethnicity and race. It also replaces the notion that the Internet connects groups expressed through a social media and further undermines the hierarchy of group structure with a discussion that focuses on the digital estate, and finds postmodern expression in the form of a Digital Association between individuals.

Through this new definition of the General Will expressed as digital association, the essay explores the impact that such a redefinition has on the Western concept of self, while differentiating between the modern “liberty” found in a modern state and the new “freedom” that is synonymous with the postmodern era. It is through the lens of John Stuart Mill’s and his work *On Liberty* that a new set of freedoms and individual social obligations are delineated and discussed.

In the essay “A New 21st Century Republicanism,” governance is looked at from the perspective of a completely open and democratic society. In particular, the question of how to open up the offline systems of the state to the democratic process that now find

themselves housed within the digital assembly and the extended digital agora, are discussed. Reinforcing the new structure, the perspective of Niklas Luhmann and his development of systems theory is incorporated into this postmodern political philosophy. From the bureaucracy found in the running of government to all the systems found within the state (i.e. transportation or agriculture), the impact that primary democracy would have is explored. With such a radical and liberating postmodern structure in place, the essay then takes the next logical and reasoned step of exploring the philosophical impact that primary democracy would have on concepts like equality and justice.

Section IV's final essay, "Reinvigorating Truth, Ending the Influence of Ideology" examines how this new digital structure can further the search for political truth that is overshadowed and lost in today's modern democratic debate and discussion within the state. It specifically looks at the possibilities this new political structure offers when it comes to limiting the overarching influence that ideology has on the search for such truth, and looks at ideology's self-reinforcing creation of public policy, which, over time, sets the overall direction of the state. Only within a primary democratic state can individual freedoms and the sovereignty of the Western nation state be isolated from free market hegemony, offering sustainability, stable political direction, and control in a world where those who hold on to the past too long find themselves embroiled in economic tyranny and political terror.²⁹⁰

With ideology sidelined, the essay examines the process of creating this new postmodern political truth through the use of the digital assembly, allowing in turn for the creation of a free political atmosphere and an open academic environment to eventually form the foundation of *all* postmodern political debate. And, by extension, fashioning public opinion, policy, and eventually legislation, thus allowing for the return of the master narratives of individual emancipation, ideas, and the search for political truth, and creating a workable first impression and definition to this postmodern era of Enlightenment.

Overall, this section of this work is devoted to exploring the possible answers to the many questions raised in the first three sections of the Anniversary Edition of Politics, summed up as: *Is there at least one viable alternative to the current political system of government that offers a return to the master narrative of individual emancipation? And is it possible to create an active and engaged society to find and explore the freedom and opportunity promised by this New Postmodern Era of Enlightenment?*

²⁹⁰ The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge/Author: Jean-Francois Lyotard/University of Minnesota/1984/p.63-64

PRIMARY DEMOCRACY—WHAT IS IT?

Postmodern Government in the 21st Century: Democratic, Direct, Digital (D³)

“Primary democracy” is not only a postmodern political concept or idea, but also a postmodern political process and a democratic system of power.

As a postmodern philosophical concept, primary democracy recognizes the natural right²⁹¹ endowed within every individual of the human race to create and execute²⁹² postmodern natural law and legislation. This foundation of primary democracy also resurrects the idea of a social contract—a political concept embraced by both John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau.

When trying to interpret this new social contract and place primary democracy in a historical context and relate it to a postmodern philosophical political idea, it becomes necessary to recognize that while the modern interpretation of John Locke’s work, *The Two Treatises on Government*, empowers the individual with “liberty, human rights, and civic responsibilities,” in a postmodern interpretation, it also correlates politically and in symmetrical form to a new set of individual “freedoms, postmodern natural laws, and individual social obligations” found within today’s society.

Specifically, there is a commonality between John Locke’s modern understanding of the original “state of nature” that serves as the foundation from which a legitimate government or “commonwealth” is brought forth and today’s postmodern reality: a reality wherein that original “state of nature,” when interpreted through the digital and telecommunication infrastructure—as made manifest in the “digital estate”—of today’s postmodern information age, presents us once again with a form of legitimate government that sees the individual as the source or central pillar of authorizing authority.

In John Locke’s foundational pretext and today’s postmodern digital estate, both past and present are anchored in the concept of a natural right, *a natural right for men and women to be free*.

When investigating the particular attributes associated with each foundational philosophical premise, one can see that in John Locke’s day, when this natural right was formed and understood within the modern context, this idea could only present political power as a dichotomy or duality between two opposing forces, best represented as people on one side of the political equation and a governing authority representing the other half of political power in society. And due to this separation or delegation of power, it has been shown through philosophical and political theory over the years that this modern definition of power has, in the end, the ability to distort the potential of each individual’s ability to live free when the context is expanded beyond the confines of John Locke’s own interpretation and understanding of man’s original state in nature.

²⁹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_and_legal_rights

²⁹² <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/execute> /4. To make valid, as by signing: *execute a deed*.

However, if this same natural right is viewed through a postmodern digital lens, it is possible to see this natural right without its modern paradox and duality of a divisive and collective power structure. Instead, one is confronted with a structure in which the power remains within the people themselves, or more pointedly, within the realm of individual prerogative. And if one expands the investigation even further, it can be argued that this postmodern interpretation of natural right creates a political power structure driven not by any artificial or collective requirement to delegate power into a separate governing authority, but one that now preserves and promotes the idea of individual self-determination throughout society—a postmodern political power structure that better reflects the conditions present *before* John Locke’s idea of legitimate government.

Primary democracy creates a new political idea or concept of power based upon this new interpretation of a natural right to be free, and places it alongside the old modern interpretation of power put forth by John Locke, thereby creating with it a new social contract. Within this new postmodern social contract, a new relationship is forged not only between the individual and the state, but also between individuals. This relationship is expressed by a new set of political freedoms and individual social obligations, which, while only accessible through the digital estate, find form and political expression through the creation of postmodern natural law and legislation.

In essence, by joining the present with the past, the original “state of man” with the “digital estate,” it becomes possible to renew, expand and strengthen the modern social contract that already recognizes the political “liberties, human rights, and civic responsibilities” found in today’s postmodern society with individual “freedoms, postmodern natural laws and individual social obligations” that pre-date the modern state of civil government. Furthermore, securing or attaching this postmodern individualistic power structure to the old now allows the individual and the government to be one, and for the general will of the people to be adequately defined by the individual, who eventually becomes the only guiding hand of a postmodern government.

A postmodern political and democratic process, primary democracy is established on a political system that follows the philosophical tradition of placing democratic political right with the people,²⁹³ and continues the historical Western tradition of increasing freedom²⁹⁴ by extending this democratic right to include an electoral power that allows for the creation of all natural laws and legislation found within the postmodern state. This political process is administered in a **Democratic** fashion, incorporating the distinction of being **Direct** in nature, discussed and acted upon in a deliberative institution known as a *Digital assembly*—(D³).

In more practical terms, primary democracy involves the transference of delegated power for creating all laws found within a modern representational democracy back to a more measured approach whereby the power to create the laws that affect the individual in his or her own “natural state of being” within society are returned to the individual.

²⁹³ Foucault, Michel. *Society Must be Defended*. St. Martin Press. 1997. p. 28.

²⁹⁴ <http://quoteinvestigator.com/2012/11/15/arc-of-universe/>

Through the use of a Digital Political Forum where public reason is the guiding instrument, the introduction of a “political conception” in this public sphere undergoes discourse and an analytical process that eventually manifests itself into a postmodern natural law presented to the Democratic Digital Assembly, where it is voted upon by a procedural direct majority. Postmodern natural law, no longer the responsibility of the representatives found in today’s legislatures of the Western world, creates a political system outside the modern legislature that is more in line with the original or classical definition of democracy: the idea of rule for the poor, by the poor.²⁹⁵

Primary democracy has its roots in the idea of deliberative democracy²⁹⁶ and is not to be confused with such ideas as direct democracy, electronic democracy or participatory democracy.²⁹⁷ These ideas are still rooted in the modern political structure of representative democracy and are open to corruption and undue influence from special interest groups or civil society.

The remainder of this essay is divided into five parts that attempt to address the two foundational aspects that form the political structure of primary democracy. The “Digital Estate,” its Creation and Shared Symmetry with Locke’s State of Nature; The “Digital Estate” and a Separation of Powers: Looking Beyond Montesquieu, and A Postmodern Theory of Natural Right & Law, and the Establishment of the Democratic Digital Assembly examine the postmodern philosophical foundation of primary democracy as a political concept.

The remaining two sections of this essay, “The Democratic Digital Assembly; Supported by Public Reason and a Digital Political Forum” and “Primary Democracy, the Digital Citizen and *Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto*” each discuss the practical structure and pragmatic political process created by the postmodern political idea of primary democracy.

Viewed in their entirety, these complimentary essays should engender a solid understanding of primary democracy, explaining and expounding upon that realm of human interaction and relationships called postmodern politics, and allow for that institution recognized and defined as *government*²⁹⁸ to be fully articulated.

The “Digital Estate,” its Creation and Shared Symmetry with Locke’s State of Nature

In 1969, Leonard Kleinrock put forth a vision built around the three emerging dimensions

²⁹⁵ Martin, Thomas R. Smith, Neel, and Stuart, Jennifer F. “Democracy in the Politics of Aristotle,” in C.W. Blackwell, ed., *Dēmos: Classical Athenian Democracy* (A. Mahoney and R. Scaife, ed., *The Stoa: a consortium for electronic publication in the humanities* [www.stoa.org]). July 26, 2003. cwb@stoa.org.

²⁹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deliberative_democracy

²⁹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_democracy

²⁹⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government>

of computing; *nomadicity* (the system support needed to provide a rich set of computing and communication capabilities and services to nomads as they move from place to place in a way that is transparent, integrated, convenient and adaptive); *embeddedness* (small intelligent devices embedded in the physical world and connected to the Internet); and *ubiquity* (Internet service availability wherever the nomad travels on a global basis).²⁹⁹ With this foundation of three dimensions supporting a powerful system of global access for mobile users, along with the addition of intelligence distributed across this global infrastructure, Leonard Kleinrock foresaw a new “space.”³⁰⁰

Today, much of his vision has been achieved in the Western world. From the United States and Canada in North America to those countries that make up the western portion of the European continent, this “space” has created a new and dynamic plane of interaction and connectivity between individuals; no matter if you are at work, at home, or in the public promenade shopping or eating at a restaurant, this “space” now permeates society, and it continues to grow and expand within our Western world.

Many equate this “space” with the idea of the Internet or simply refer to it as a feature of the information age. But doing so ignores the developing characteristics of this “space.” As the use of the Internet expands and communication technologies evolve both in use and infrastructure, this “space,” as Leonard Kleinrock described it, has grown beyond a simple technical description. Here, in the second decade of the 21st century, we are actually confronted with something much grander in scope, design and possibility; we have, in fact, created a new postmodern “estate.”

Like the Three Estates of the Realm³⁰¹ or the Fourth Estate,³⁰² a term coined by Edmund Burk in the English Parliament in 1787 to describe the role of the press in modern society, this new “digital estate” is a logical and reasoned extension to describe the characteristics and properties evident in this growing force and power within postmodern society.

Yet although the idea of a digital estate roughly conforms to the parameters of a definition that has, in the past, been applied to the roles of the clergy, nobility, commoners and the press, this new estate wields far greater influence and power within today’s society than the other four estates ever possessed. Specifically, the digital estate has economic, legal, social and, of particular interest to this discussion, *political* properties unique to itself.

The political properties of the digital estate flow easily through all aspects and strata of society. From the hallways of power within government, the bureaucracy that runs the state, to the courts that sit in judgment, the digital estate has settled in for the long haul.

²⁹⁹

<http://www.lk.cs.ucla.edu/data/files/Kleinrock/An%20Internet%20Vision%20The%20Invisible%20Global%20Infrastructure.pdf>

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estates_of_the_realm

³⁰² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Estate

Industry, the financial sector, and small business depend upon it not only to increase profits but to traverse the political minefield of daily life. Even corporate boardrooms have been wired into the digital estate, from the manufacturing floors of the private sector to the corner dry cleaner, the digital estate has found a home, and people are beholden to its applications and use.

In many respects, the political properties found in the digital estate mirror the modern political concept of the original “state of nature”³⁰³ found in the work of such political philosophers as Thomas Aquinas, John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. In many ways, the digital estate gives us a raw look at man in a state of nature that pre-dates modern government, the digital estate having as yet to establish an effective governing component or common judge and authority which forms the cornerstone of a postmodern definition of being in a state of nature.³⁰⁴

Furthermore, the digital estate remains a free and open online community; those who use and work in the postmodern digital estate do so without cumbersome rules, regulations or interference. The construction of the Internet, just one component of the digital estate, offers evidence of the cooperation between free men and women, a virtual world founded on the creation of contracts between individuals for mutual benefit are arranged and agreed to without the interference of a common or arbitrary authority.

However, when reviewing the characteristics of today’s digital estate, or discussing the similarities between the digital estate and the state of nature, it is necessary to clarify *whose* definition of this state of nature most closely resembles the properties of the postmodern digital estate.

There are two political philosophers whose writings about the original state of nature have the greatest influence: Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. To begin with, each saw the state of nature of pre-political man in vastly different ways. And in the examination of these differences, it is possible to see the symmetry that exists between Locke’s concept of the state of nature and the political properties found in today’s digital estate.

Whereas Thomas Hobbes saw a state of nature as a very barbaric and primitive existence—a “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short,” existence, a condition of war “of every man against every man,” a war in which there is no industry, no culture, and no real society,”³⁰⁵ John Locke saw a state of nature almost entirely the opposite: for the purposes of this discussion, Locke’s view was symmetrical with today’s digital estate. In his interpretation of the state of nature, individuals lived in mutual respect for one another, and these moral characterizations included full-blown rights and obligations.³⁰⁶

Take, for example, the technical infrastructure of the digital estate from both a hardware

³⁰³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_nature

³⁰⁴ Simmons, A. John. “Locke’s State of Nature.” *Political Theory*, Sage Publications. Vol. 17. No. 3. 1989. p. 459.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 450

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

and software perspective. In the physical construction of the digital estate, there is little if no government regulation regarding the technical requirements of the servers, routers, digital terminals, or equipment that makes up the mobile and wireless network from cell phone towers right down to the fibre optic cable used. What does exist regarding this aspect of the digital estate is a regime of patent law that protects companies and individuals and their technical achievements. In fact, most of the physical construction of the digital estate is one of mutual co-operation; companies working together from a similar technical plane to ensure the compatibility of various components and achieve smooth running of the digital estate itself.

On the software side, there is little or no overarching authority enforcing rules and regulations upon the *content* of the digital estate. Instead of patent law, one sees a regime of licensing agreements, and copyright and trademark law, a very soft form of regulation that takes no stance upon what should be protected.

Returning once again to the debate about the state of nature, John Locke's state of nature consisted of individuals, whereas Thomas Hobbes saw society being run by and existing in groups and communities. If one looks at the digital estate today, it is the individual who utilizes and connects with this new estate, although organizations and groups are present online, it is through an individual interface that connections are made.

For instance, even though the Internet, just one aspect of the digital estate, houses the web pages of countless organizations such as Facebook, e-Bay, iTunes, Twitter and the like, the majority of the Internet's content belongs to the one billion or more individuals who have signed up for these websites.

Another discrepancy that favours a Lockeian interpretation of this digital estate is in the nature of the relationships forged online between individuals. Instead of each person being in a "constant state of war with one another," as Hobbes envisioned, there exists a code of conduct that more closely mirrors a society wherein individuals work and interact with each other in mutual respect.

Certainly there are those who wish to do harm and take advantage of others in this digital estate. Hackers and their viruses certainly pose a problem. So too do those few who go online and spew hate-filled rants on chat sites, message boards and Twitter feeds. But compared to the majority of users, these individual "trolls" are a very small minority, mirrored in our offline society where we see that only a small minority find themselves within the criminal element. Whereas thousands find themselves in jail, hundreds of millions walk free in the West, obeying society's rules and laws.

Hobbes and Locke also differ drastically in how each viewed the condition of men in this state of nature. For Hobbes, it was an either/or proposition: you were either in a state of nature or not. For Locke, individuals are *in* a state of nature with respect to certain people while at the same time being *out* of a state of nature with respect to others. Here again, John Locke's position more resembles today's reality.

Again, if we just look at the Internet, it is evident that it is only possible to access the online society as an individual. And once connected, you remain an individual. Even if you join a social network site or a political organization online, the relationship remains outside the realm of collective organizing; your online existence is that of an individual, and the organization stays in its place on the Internet without following you to other sites.

Finally, another example that links the postmodern digital estate and John Locke's view of the state of nature is the structure of the Internet itself. Its very creation and the manner of its construction favours the individual over the collective, requiring the individual to come to it, as it were, allowing the individual to remain independent to form his or her own associations without falling under the rule of any group or structure.

Thus it would seem that it is John Locke's position that the political properties of the digital estate are most clearly aligned. It now becomes necessary to look at the power structure that exists within the digital estate and how the digital estate can affect the postmodern democracy of the Western world.

The "Digital Estate" and a Separation of Powers: Looking Beyond Montesquieu

First, it must be stated that the doctrine known as the "separation of powers" can be traced back as far as Aristotle,³⁰⁷ but when referenced recently at the end of the modern era, most point to the work of Baron Montesquieu of France,³⁰⁸ who wrote during the Enlightenment of the 16th and 17th centuries, as having the greatest influence.

Second, when trying to understand the implications and structure of primary democracy, although it is Montesquieu's philosophical work of separating power into three specific branches of government (the legislative, executive and judicial) that forms the foundation of philosophical thought, it will also be necessary to incorporate postmodern ideas from legal theorists like Bruce Ackerman³⁰⁹ and others into the way government in the West *should* be structured and designed in a postmodern world.

Regardless of whether one believes in the theory of a "constrained parliamentarianism,"³¹⁰ a Westminster democratic structure, or the existing and practicing example of a constitutional and presidential framework like that of the United States, the shadow of Montesquieu's tripartite system looms large. Yet, in the 21st century, the separation of powers involves not only presidents and parliaments, but also the constitutional status of courts and administrative agencies.³¹¹

This statement is no less accurate or true than when trying to access the power and influence of the digital estate and determining the way it should be incorporated into the

³⁰⁷ Politics-Book 5/Aristotle/translated by Benjamin Jowett/www.classics.mit.edu/aristotle/politics

³⁰⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montesquieu>

³⁰⁹ <http://www.law.yale.edu/faculty/BAckerman.htm>

³¹⁰ Ackerman, Bruce. "The New Separation of Powers." *Harvard Law Review*. Vol. 13. No.3. 2000. p. 634.

³¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 639.

power structure of a postmodern state. As discussed earlier, the digital estate has economic, legal, social and political properties. With such a complex construction and wide range of power and influence, it will be necessary not only to revisit and rework Montesquieu's tripartite formulation in its entirety if the digital estate—*this 4th branch of power*—is to be properly understood in a postmodern structure of government, but it will also be necessary to embark on a new path, one requiring new ideas and options for interpreting and separating power.

The sole philosophical purpose behind a separation of powers within the state was to make democracy as just and effective as possible. However, despite the use of this idea to some extent throughout every nation in the West, not all nation states have shown an interest in achieving or reaching this stated goal. As evidenced by recent history, many Western European parliaments have become mired in the weeds of political gridlock.

From ideas like proportional representation, which limit the power of the legislature and entrench a political elite in power despite electoral defeat, or constitutional mechanisms that limit the power of the executive branch to a small number of years in power, thus putting a stranglehold on policy,³¹² the concept of a separation of powers has found itself under constant manipulation that undermines its influence and application.

A political quagmire has befallen even the world's oldest democracy: the classical British system of Westminster. Although this is the most glaring example, nations like Canada and Germany have also as yet to overcome the obstacles presented when trying to truly keep all three branches independent of each other.³¹³ Whether those obstacles be conceptual or practical, modern representational democracy in the 21st century has found itself incapable of maintaining a functioning tripartite system without a tremendous bureaucracy of checks and balances, political infighting, and gamesmanship.³¹⁴

In fact, for many modern academics and politicians alike, the ability to separate power into distinct, autonomous and independent administering arms of a modern government is neither plausible or realistic. In fact, some have gone so far as to describe it as a myth.³¹⁵ And as modern society evolves into the postmodern era, it is more and more difficult to maintain what little separation there is between the many arms of government; power is wrested away from the three branches of government into another area of the state by the ever-expanding economy, civil society and private sector.

In many respects, the problems that arise from the modern interpretation of Montesquieu are not only solved with primary democracy and its recognition of the digital estate, but the digital estate also offers the chance to limit the power of government in such a way that the system achieves an equilibrium of power between the various branches that would form the foundation of a postmodern government, a pinnacle of achievement that has, to this day, eluded Montesquieu and those who have followed in his footsteps.

³¹² Ibid. p. 654.

³¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_system

³¹⁴ http://elaw.murdoch.edu.au/archives/issues/2006/1/eLaw_German_13_2006_08.pdf

³¹⁵ Ibid.

To be more precise, the reason there is such friction between the various branches of government, and the reason that power is ineffectively administered, is due, not to a lack of balance between competing areas of authority, but to the existence of a power and force that falls outside the realm of all three branches of authority Montesquieu envisioned. Once only expressed as existing in the pre-political area known as the state of nature, this force and power is now understood to emanate from a natural right,³¹⁶ found and embedded within the digital estate, and exercisable in the form of postmodern natural law and legislation.³¹⁷

The modern form of representational democracy has consistently ignored the existence of postmodern natural law due to its inaccessibility. As already documented over the course of many years, the idea of a pure separation of powers has faded in many Western democratic states, and many nations prefer to amalgamate the naturally occurring divisions of power and function into one holistic entity of government that legislates and regulates in all aspects of society, thereby creating a situation where there is no longer any distinction, in either definition or form, between the concepts of private or public space; the “nation state” is the “government,” and the individual belongs to both at the same time.

However, with the arrival of the digital estate and the Internet, society is, for the first time, able to distinguish between competing forms of power and the various legal forms they take. Thus, while law, legislation and regulation were all viewed in the same modern context, exercisable only to the representative sitting in the legislature, the reality of today’s postmodern world is such that these same distinctions of political and legal properties can be further enhanced.

Specifically, primary democracy allows for the possibility that almost every law in the land could be refined, by the people themselves, in a political forum designed around the idea of individual self-determination. More importantly, as this specific separation and definition of these three legal properties of law, legislation and regulation becomes possible through the digital estate, it in turn can recast and recodify the foundation for the functioning of the postmodern Western nation state: the rule of law.

Primary democracy reorganizes and refashions the outdated modern structure of “state-government” and reinstates the original distinctive lines that John Locke spoke of: a world where government, state and the people remain separate but equal. Specifically, primary democracy, through the digital estate, re-establishes control of the state by the electorate, to “We the People,” in American terms. To accomplish this objective, a redistribution of the power that was once found in the legislative branch of government must occur. In essence, the power of delegation must not only be rethought, but the role of the representative must also be reshaped.

Primary democracy evenly disperses the power once found in the legislature—equated with Montesquieu’s first branch in his theory of separation—and places this power with

³¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_rights

³¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_law

the individual. The power inherited by the individual is exercisable by utilizing the fourth branch—the digital estate—and its new institutions (the democratic digital assembly and the digital political forum) found within primary democracy, allowing for greater political input and control for those who have never had access to it before.

In Bruce Ackerman's *The New Separation of Powers*, the branch of government that encompasses the digital estate would be concerned with what he describes as the higher law track, while the postmodern legislature would be created for what he calls the normal law track.³¹⁸ With this ability to concretely delineate specific areas of legislative power through this fourth branch not only within government but within the state in general, it now becomes possible for the first time to not only isolate the other relationships of power within government like Montesquieu had hoped, but also to allow for their effective judicial interpretation and administration in their outcomes and in their general direction.

This initial separation of power between the digital estate and the postmodern legislature will engender another.³¹⁹ There will be a need for a digital supreme court or a “constitutional court” that can make the principles enacted by the people into operational realities.³²⁰ The proper composition of this court—its members, their length of duration on the bench, or their structured and engineered power—is best left to experts with more knowledge and experience in this area.

Thus we are confronted with our first real split with Montesquieu. As Bruce Ackerman points out, if one defines a lawmaking institution as a distinct power when its members are selected by a distinct principle, then we have a new trinitarian formulation: parliament plus the people plus the court.³²¹

This basic outline of the legislative and judicial components of primary democracy brings us to the discussion of the executive branch and its role and formulation contingent on the demands and functions allowed it by the fourth branch of power, the digital estate. And any structure that adheres to the idea of primary democracy will still have a need for a functioning cabinet and a set of regulations or policy initiatives to ensure that the state is capable of creating a future that guarantees freedom, peace, prosperity and security.

Surprisingly, it may not be necessary to create a new structure to accommodate this political ideal: all that is required for this new postmodern structure of governing is a little tweaking of what already exists, along with a thorough understanding of the Swiss model of governance.

In the Swiss bicameral system built around the idea of direct democracy, there is absolute equality between the federal senate (the council of states) and the nationally elected

³¹⁸ , Bruce. “The New Separation of Powers.” *Harvard Law Review*. Vol. 13. No.3. 2000. p. 634.

³¹⁹ Ibid. p. 667.

³²⁰ Ibid. p. 667.

³²¹ Ibid. p. 668.

house (the National Council).³²² In this system of government, the executive is formed as a seven-member cabinet (the Federal Council); next, they reject the idea of direct popular election and require each member of the Council to gain support of both houses for a fixed term of four years; and finally, they make it impossible for the two houses to stage a vote of no confidence during the four-year period.³²³

Using the Swiss model of government as guide, one can see the beginnings of a suitable structure upon which the executive branch of primary democracy can be formed. Where there is a federal senate in the Swiss example, one can envision the institutions of primary democracy forged from the political properties found within the digital estate. Coupled with a nationally elected body—the representatives of the people housed in a postmodern legislature—this authority could take the shape of a congress, assembly or parliament as the people choose.

The executive branch of primary democracy would therefore come from within this nationally elected body, the people's representatives, the make up, size and duration of existence of such a cabinet all dependent upon an agreed-upon formula. As for the power and authority this cabinet would exercise, their role would be independent and actionable, except for those areas that would fall under the purview of postmodern natural law and legislation, which are the responsibility of the people and are exercised through the institutions of primary democracy.

The digital estate, this fourth branch of power, affords the people living in a postmodern society the opportunity to empower themselves not only by reorganizing Montesquieu's tripartite separation of powers, incorporating itself into the power structure of the state itself, but it also affords people the opportunity to create a new dynamic structure of political power within a set of new institutions that engage the people themselves in a vast expansion of democratic input and control that the individual has over their own governing process.

The next stage in the process of forming primary democracy and its functions is to understand the limitations in definition and scope of the digital estate as a political power. It is necessary to come to terms with the constraints and parameters surrounding this new postmodern power in an attempt to achieve a clear view of how the digital estate is exercisable and actionable through postmodern natural law, a necessary intellectual footing if this fourth branch of power is to be properly used.

A Postmodern Theory of Natural Right & Law, and the Establishment of the Democratic Digital Assembly

As with the need to reorganize the power structure of the state through the separation of powers to accommodate the existence of a digital estate, primary democracy also forces the re-examination of the entire foundation of today's political philosophy that surrounds

³²² Ibid. p. 676.

³²³ Ibid. p. 676.

the core ideas and concepts that protect the rights and liberties of the individual. In particular, it becomes necessary to re-examine the origin of such concepts as a political right³²⁴ and a natural right.

Doing so makes it possible to extend the origin of such concepts to their postmodern equivalent, allowing an opportunity to not only understand the legitimacy of these new postmodern instruments of power and influence, but also how to properly use the power that is now available to the individual. The digital estate offers the individual not only new avenues of political participation and influence, but also ensures that the fulfillment of the individual's dreams and ultimate happiness returns to the political debate in our postmodern world.

First, it is necessary to sketch out a rough framework of today's modern philosophical position. From an intellectual standpoint, it must be stated that the modern political conception of society found in the West is forged on the premise of a social contract³²⁵ that exists between free and equal individuals living together to form a society,³²⁶ a philosophical foundation with which most modern philosophers will not quibble.

For purposes of historical reference and clarification, for the most part, this theoretical position sees the person as a social being. The only social contract theorist of modernity who has maintained that man, before entering into the state of society by a contract, is to be thought of as nothing but an isolated individual without social connections, was Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau's unique interpretation flew in the face of that of others, like Hobbes, Locke and Kant, who reasoned that man, as part of a natural community, was in a "state of nature," a social being.

Interestingly enough, Hobbes took it further: the individual, by virtue of his individuality, was in conflict with his fellow man. This position was so extreme that Hobbes concluded that, whether alone or in a group, the individual will always be in constant conflict, at war with all other individuals. This continual conflict thus requires a political resolution—in other words, *law*—to allow humankind to flourish and progress.³²⁷ A law so encompassing that it mandates definition and meaning in all aspects of individual life.

Secondly, this social contract followed the laws, rules and regulations upon which the terms and condition of society were constructed. These legalities between individuals, and between individuals and a legitimate authority or government, are referred to today as the rule of law, and it shapes how we in the modern West define political rights.

But from where, exactly, does this social contract and its subsequent rule of law find their origins? Do they spring forth from the temple of some god? Can one find such a right bestowed upon man through some pagan ritual? For this writer, its origin agrees with that proposed by H.L.A. Hart, that this is a right that comes from nature, and is thus a natural

³²⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_and_political_rights

³²⁵ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/contractarianism/>

³²⁶ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls/>

³²⁷ <http://ajj.oxfordjournals.org/content/50/1/1.full.pdf+html/2005/MartinRhonheimer/p.53>

right. For the purposes of this discussion, there is only one particular natural right that is of concern here; the *equal right of all people to be free*.³²⁸

When looked upon solely from the modern philosophical perspective, this natural right to be free can only recognize that power which originates within a collective, that of the state or some other form of legitimate authority residing primarily outside of individual influence or control. To compensate for this modern philosophical imbalance of power, where all the power resides with a group or collective body, this natural right creates the prospect of a *political right*, which then limits the power of intrusion held by the state through a mandated set of protected individual liberties, forms of expression, associations, etc. This allows the social contract to have a certain balance and creates equilibrium through a process of reciprocity,³²⁹ securing for all the people within the state a reasonableness in regards to the common good, thus fostering peace and security.³³⁰

It is this framework of the modern Western state that serves as the origin for today's modern human rights and civil rights movements. For many scholars and academics, this negative law³³¹—developed over time, and defined as a human right—emerged “in response to the social disruptions of modernity,” primarily the advent of capitalism and the rise of the modern state.³³² Furthermore, these human rights were forged through a Western philosophical tradition that only sees such rights narrowly as individualist civil, political, and property rights.³³³

In essence, the modern interpretation of this natural right that states there exists an equal right for all men and women to live free offers today's individual a foundation of “liberty, human rights and civic responsibility,” as the outward practical extension of the meaning and purpose of this natural right.

Now, viewed from the postmodern perspective through the digital estate, this natural right to be free is interpreted in a vastly different way. The first area of distinction is recognized when one tries to understand the specific parameters of the digital estate itself. Due to its specific and unique nature, the foundation of the digital estate permeates *all of society*; the digital estate encompasses both the public and the private spheres at the same time.

For instance, regardless of how one describes government, whether from a micro or macro level, the digital estate has an overt effect on all forms of communication in all areas. Within the bureaucracy, the digital estate flows between departments and those

³²⁸ Hart, H.L.A. “Are There any Natural Rights?” *The Philosophical Review*. Cornell University. Vol. 64. No. 2. 1955. p. 175.

³²⁹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reciprocity_\(social_and_political_philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reciprocity_(social_and_political_philosophy))

³³⁰ Goodhart, Michael. Origins and Universality in the Human Rights Debate. *Human Rights Quarterly*. Vol. 25. 2003. p. 943.

³³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negative_and_positive_rights

³³² Goodhart, Michael. Origins and Universality in the Human Rights Debate. *Human Rights Quarterly*. Vol. 25. 2003. p. 943.

³³³ *Ibid.*

who work in them. From a macro perspective, the digital estate is the cement that binds together the modern tripartite powers of Montesquieu's theory.

When viewed from the perspective of the private sector, the digital estate forms the foundation of all financial transactions; it exists in every business office, and is used by and between all workers. Throughout civil society and the background culture,³³⁴ the digital estate forms the bonds between various groups and their members. At home, the digital estate allows one to connect to loved ones, to family members stretched across vast distances, to the local community, and all four corners of the world.

In interpreting this natural right to be free from the postmodern philosophical position, it is important at this point to recognize that the power of the digital estate itself has two sources of origin: 1. from its content, and 2. from the individual connected to it. Even though the power of the digital estate can be broken into specific economic, social, legal and political qualities, these collective attributes can only be seen as residing within an individual context or structure.

Furthermore, due to the unique individual structure that forms the base of these four properties within the digital estate, one must acknowledge the cumulative effect of its power, a situation unlike any found within the modern understanding of power—a postmodern dynamic and ever-changing power source versus a normal static construction of modern power interpretations.

For example, whereas in the modern interpretation of political power, the judiciary or the legislative body itself maintains a level of influence throughout society—never increasing or decreasing its intrusive nature—the power that resides in the properties of digital estate reside not only within the estate itself, but also in and with the individuals connected to it.

Thus it is possible to see the beginnings of the separation between the modern and the postmodern; while the modern allows the individual a measured amount of input and control over their own life within the state, offering a certain, limited amount of liberty and control, the postmodern interpretation of the natural right to be free resides outside the modern concept of this rights-based regime, affording the individual the freedom to fully control and direct not only their life, but also the systems, networks, organizations and institutions of the postmodern state.

Therefore, where modernity sees power vested in the state, postmodernism acknowledges that power originates in the individual. The unique design of the digital estate differs drastically in composition, structure and design to the modern definition of power residing with any collective, community, group or state authority. But, despite the intrinsic uniqueness of individual power, there is no doubt that the digital estate recognizes the political fact that a person is not only an individual, but also a social being.

It is through this social power of the fourth branch, the harnessing of the individual power found within the various properties and structures of the digital estate manifesting itself

³³⁴ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls/>

in different forms of interests and needs, and evolving into political policies and regulations with a desire to see these instruments furnished throughout society, that one is afforded the opportunity to exercise both the individual and social power of the digital estate through a collective or social distribution of power. It is within this context that eventually the power of the digital estate finds expression through the postmodern distinction of natural law.

Whereas the modern interpretation of the human right is negative, and protects the individual from unwanted or unjust intrusion by the government or any other authority within the state, the postmodern philosophical interpretation of a natural right found within the digital estate is understood to be positive in nature, and affords the individual the opportunity to shape their environment within the state, outside of any government or authority, so that the individual can live free. It must also be stated that this postmodern natural law exists in various forms, and exists *specifically* within the digital estate as a set of normative natural laws; their modern moral or ethical definition or commonplace understanding replaced by a postmodern foundation that can only be realized or defined as one containing only a political value.

But what then constitutes the political parameters of this postmodern natural law?

To fully understand the political outcomes and definitions created by the postmodern perspective of this natural right to be free, it is necessary to once again turn to the past, and the writings of John Locke, his *Two Treatises of Government*, and his theory of natural rights and interpretations of the original state of nature.

By comparing his philosophical position of “natural man” that saw people paradigmatically as free individuals in their own right with limited responsibility towards their community, buttressed by an individual’s rights and independent of and prior to any social obligations of performance or obedience tied to their role in the community,³³⁵ with the foundation, context and particular requirements that form today’s digital estate, it becomes possible to visualize and characterize the parameters of definition and meaning that this pivot point in political philosophy, this natural right to be free, has on the scope and definition of any political properties existing within the concept of postmodern natural law.

Again, for the purpose of historical accuracy and debate, it is important to mention that although other writers, namely Thomas Hobbes, put forth a concept of natural rights, his interpretation of what existed in the original state of nature, derived from a set of ‘laws of nature.’

Of particular concern here is that Thomas Hobbes’s conception of these laws of nature are founded on the idea of self-preservation, and, as with his other interpretations of the original state of nature, are inconsistent with the actual intellectual and philosophical physical design of the digital estate. For truly it must be asked from the postmodern

³³⁵ Goodhart, Michael. Origins and Universality in the Human Rights Debate. *Human Rights Quarterly*. Vol. 25. 2003. p. 948.

perspective: “Does there exist any prescribed or preexistent law of the Internet?” When viewed in this context, the postmodern philosophical foundation of the digital estate once again shows itself to be symmetrically aligned with the pre-political notion of freedom found within John Locke’s *Two Treatises on Government*.

Although Locke clearly states what power or authority is transferable in the original state of nature to the “commonwealth” or legitimate authority of society for the protection of the individual—this transference encompassing his famous statement of “life, liberty and security of property”—when it comes to discussing the digital estate of today’s postmodern society, what remains *unstated* in John Locke’s formulation for what should be transferable in the original state of nature has greater meaning.

In the digital estate, the unstated duties and social obligations that reside solely with the individual in Locke’s natural state can only philosophically fall under the definition of postmodern natural law, a distinction from the modern interpretation in that these pre-political natural laws alone are for the individual to decide—the power of authority and decision-making reside in the digital estate, and in the concept of a postmodern natural law, and *not in any modern government or authority*.

Furthermore, if one examines this philosophical divergence carefully, one can infer from the dichotomy between the original state of nature and today’s digital estate a set of individual political freedoms, postmodern natural laws, and individual social obligations derived and anchored in the same right from which John Locke brings forth his position: the natural, equal right of all men and women to be free

It is also important to note that within the digital estate, both the natural right to exercise this power (a function) that is the cornerstone of primary democracy, and the definition (an applied component), the “postmodern natural law” itself, are not to be confused with any modern day human or civil rights regime.

Specifically, even though primary democracy remains committed to preserving the modern, natural (human) rights regime built from Locke’s interpretation of legitimate representational government, preserving itself as the cornerstone in the definition of a limiting principle in regard to state power, the overall focus of any postmodern structure such as primary democracy now concerns itself more with the parameters, definition and substance found within the confines of postmodern natural law itself. Such parameters and definitions of a postmodern natural law would include “civil interests” such as, but not limited to: life, health, education, religion, justice and the possession of property and wealth.

And so, given that the only body of authority right now within the Western state that has any authority over these areas of civil interest is the modern representative legislature, how does one go about exercising this new postmodern perspective?

In Robert Nozick's book *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, he states, "Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights). So strong and far-reaching are these rights that they raise the question of what, if anything, the state and its officials may do. How much room do individual rights leave for the state?"³³⁶

This question accurately describes the impasse that the postmodern West remains entangled in today because of two conflicting philosophical solitudes founded in modern philosophical thought. On the one hand is the statist argument best represented by modern European political thought, which has its roots in the "state of nature" theory propounded by the 17th-century political philosopher, Thomas Hobbes. The welfare state, government control of cultural industries, and a public sector that dwarfs that of the private sector are just some of the hallmark characteristics of a statist government.

Opposing such control and overbearing authority is the limited government proposed by John Locke, and best represented by the United States and the Swiss model of direct democracy. In the U.S model, government influence and power are checked by a constitution that specifically limits the range and control that any federal, state or local authority can wield at any time.

But this description of two, mutually exclusive, dueling modern philosophical opposites is not completely accurate.

For even in the United States of America in the second decade of the 21st century, the power and scope of government or the administrative state,³³⁷ as it has been referred to by many modern contemporary writers, has unprecedented reach into every aspect of American society, from the private sector and civil society to the homes of any given individual, the role of a centralized governing authority is both pervasive and overt.

Thus, despite the seeming alternative to Hobbes's all-encompassing doctrine of power and control, the alternative proposed by John Locke remains bound to both the philosophical and theoretical shadow of the Hobbesian self-protecting, intrusive and all-powerful state.

It is the stated intent of primary democracy to release this alternative—posited by such thinkers as John Locke and Robert Nozick—from the chains of Hobbes's all powerful and intrusive modern state. Already one can see that through the digital estate and the incorporation of postmodern natural law into the political dynamic, Thomas Hobbes's perspective that there are only two alternatives for political order—given the human condition as he saw it at the time, chaos or absolute power³³⁸—was incorrect.

There are two specific problems that must be addressed concerning any alternative to the Hobbesian argument that must be made if a sustainable alternative is to replace the

³³⁶ Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. Blackwell Publishers. 1974. p. ix.

³³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Administrative_State

³³⁸ http://www2.units.it/etica/2007_2/GRCIC.pdf

modern argument for centralized control. First, John Locke saw the idea of absolute government favoured by Hobbes as worse than the worst consequences of anarchy,³³⁹ and the present philosophical position put forth by Robert Nozick is that the only intelligent choice offered as an alternative to this Leviathan state is some limited form of government and anarchy.

Thus, the real alternative for those who oppose the Hobbesian model is not limited government, but limited government *and* anarchy.

This issue of anarchy is the Achilles heel for those academics and philosophers who argue for limited or minimalist government; their arguments against the idea of a Leviathan state never attempt to explain or define what “limited” or “minimalist” government is, nor do they address the issue of what takes its place when there are no laws or regulation, leaving only the option of anarchy to fill the void.

The second problem facing those who embrace the notion of limited government and anarchy, making their position truly untenable, is the fact that a government like that proposed by John Locke and Robert Nozick and their followers does not exist.

It is for these two reasons that libertarian thought,³⁴⁰ or for that matter, any similar political position that favours limited government as its foundational choice, has never fully been accepted by the general public or the electorate in any Western nation. And for good reason: this philosophical and pragmatic structure of political power is unworkable.

It is this need to rethink the minimalist argument and the challenge of defining anarchy that primary democracy attempts to overcome. With the introduction of postmodern natural law theory, and the creation, implementation and regulation of postmodern natural law, primary democracy attempts to define the void where now only anarchy reigns supreme.

Primary democracy offers a concrete solution to the false choice of limited government and anarchy, and defies the notion that there is simply no choice other than absolute government or an all-encompassing, centralized authority, as the statist claim. Not only does primary democracy and the creation of postmodern natural law show that the freedom required by the anarchists and free marketers remains possible, unlike the false promises and unproven platitudes of the free market, the modern world bears witness to the consequences of an unregulated market—the Great Economic Collapse of 2008—revealing that anarchy in the form of an “unregulated environment” only brings collapse and chaos.

Where other alternatives to the Hobbesian model have failed, primary democracy allows one to look seriously at the issue of delegation from a pragmatic political perspective—the central issue that has been the stumbling block to any serious debate regarding the concept of limited government. By setting down distinct areas of legislation for those in a

³³⁹ Ibid. p. 463.

³⁴⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertarianism>

modern legislature, and placing other areas of jurisdiction within the postmodern theory of natural law found within the digital estate, it becomes possible to replace the notion of anarchy once and for all.

Furthermore, with the introduction of postmodern natural law, it is possible to more accurately distinguish between what is public and what is private, where the state begins and government ends. But such an idea does not come without its challenges. New areas of concern will emerge, such as how to determine new lines of demarcation between competing political concepts, like just where to place a defining line between postmodern natural law and a human right—a necessary debate if one wishes to create for all individuals a path of freedom without traversing upon the natural right of another to be free. Yet despite such intellectual challenges, primary democracy allows the individual of the postmodern state the opportunity to clearly define the role and influence that the representative should have in a postmodern government.

The problem has always been that when looking at the issue of delegation from a modern perspective, it was always argued that it was impossible for the farmer to be in the field and the legislature at the same time. It therefore became necessary for the individual of the state to delegate enormous power to a representative. Geography and time limited the choices of our political system.

In such a situation, the rule of law that is the guiding light of the state has remained something that the people lived under, while never being able to directly influence its moral and ethical character, or define its political and economic components. But the logistics and limitations of yesterday's modern era have given way to a new postmodernism dominated by technological advances, culminating in the creation of the digital estate; the back roads of the countryside have given way to the instantaneous communication of the information superhighway.

Today, the digital estate allows for the continued oversight, regulation and direction of the various systems, networks and organizations critical to the running of a postmodern society. Furthermore, the unique nature and design of the digital estate affords the individual unprecedented control and input into the decision-making process, a chance to shape the various forces and powers that dictate the course of their own daily lives.

When determining what becomes or what should be defined as a postmodern natural law in a postmodern society, one can look at John Locke's second essay in *Two Treatises of Government* and distill from his writings the essence of what underpinned a proper and just definition for delegation and, by extension, the limits of power that the representative can wield within any postmodern government or state authority.

From his reasoning, there is an implied measure of *efficiency* and *individual autonomy* that forms the foundation of the power delegated to a representative in a modern legislature. This similar line of justified reasoning also applies to any postmodern

structure when trying to determine the parameters of the power a representative should be entrusted with, and the area of concern or authority that a postmodern natural law should maintain, using the digital estate as the main point of reference in any political debate.

From Locke's perspective, the only power allowed the representative was found in areas that could be seen as protecting the citizens of the state in respect to life, liberty and property, any other power or authority remained under the purview of the individual. This was based upon a reasoned and implied measure of efficiency and individual autonomy that surmised that these decisions were made more effectively when carried out by the individual himself.

It is John Locke's limiting argument and theory of efficiency in determining the term *delegation* that the postmodern concept of primary democracy uses in its attempt to alter the current all-encompassing legislative authority found within the modern institution of representational democracy.

By replacing this all-encompassing authority and power to legislate in all areas found within the modern nation state, it becomes possible to reorient the political system such that the authority that today dilutes the power of a human right and unjustly limits the natural right of the individual to be free is curtailed. This kind of all-encompassing authority, the hallmark trait of all who follow the Hobbesian philosophical trail, is a power of totality that was never found to reside within the "original state of nature" whereby an individual life had to be ordered, and wherein the individual is seen as unable or unfit to determine the direction of their own lives in any interpretation of man's original state.

Primary democracy, through the legal instrument of a postmodern natural law, replaces the all-encompassing modern legislative power held by the representative with one that is more narrowly defined. The modern representative of a postmodern legislature is required only to legislate with a specific and narrow vein of authority, a role that in a postmodern state exists solely outside the realm of any natural law or piece of natural legislation that finds comfort within the digital estate.

Instead of a representative making these decisions, primary democracy and its acknowledgment in the existence of a postmodern natural law offers the opportunity for the individual citizen of a postmodern society to oversee for themselves those areas that fall outside of John Locke's permissible parameters of authority delegated to the modern representative sitting in any given postmodern legislature, parliament, senate, congress or council.

By binding this postmodern foundation of natural law within the digital estate to the term *delegation*, it becomes possible to mold and shape postmodern institutions to specifically address the issues and characteristics that form the political and legal foundation of a postmodern political society. The question then becomes how to access this natural law that no longer exists as an invested power of a representative sitting in a postmodern legislature.

Through the institutions of primary democracy, specifically the **Democratic Digital Assembly**, the postmodern natural law embedded in the digital estate becomes exercisable and actionable, offering the individual the greatest opportunity for input into the democratic legislative process, not only in the creation of postmodern natural law, but also legislation, a process of refinement, offering a level of accessibility to power and decision-making that the individual of the Western world has never known.

Now, many will argue that there exists no authority for the removal of power away from the modern legislature and the representative to a postmodern institution like the Democratic Digital Assembly.

John Locke's *Two Treaties of Government* states that there can be only one supreme power, which is the legislature.³⁴¹ It is John Locke's interpretations and writings above any other doctrine or philosophical work that scholars and academics alike have agreed upon; it is from his work that the foundation of today's modern representational democracies in the West inherits its legitimacy. In the following passage he clarifies and narrows the definition of this legislature as a fiduciary power to act for certain ends, where there still remains with the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them.³⁴²

It is this term, *alter*, that once again needs to be introduced into public debate. As evidenced within the work of John Locke, there exists within the foundations of legitimacy the opportunity to structurally change or "alter" the legislative component of any existing modern government.

In summary then, from the perspective and definition of primary democracy, the term *anarchy* no longer means "no government." Primary democracy replaces those areas found in the private sector of a modern Hobbesian society, including such things as education, health, religion and the taxation of property, and places control and specific sector management now currently under the purview of the representative in the hands of the citizens of the postmodern state within the confines of the postmodern institution of the democratic digital assembly, thus creating a new postmodern political relationship between the people and their government and building upon a new trust between all individuals of the state.

A postmodern political structure, this democratic digital assembly would act in the best interests of all the people, the power of modern electors transferred to citizens, a political relationship transferred to a new fiduciary power established between the individuals of the state. This would be a new deliberative and actionable body of state authority, encompassing all the power, privilege and legitimacy found within the legislature of a representational democracy today.

Furthermore, as recent history has shown, without an individual right to create postmodern natural law and legislation, people are bound to some form of subjugation

³⁴¹ [http://www.efm.bris.ac.uk/het/locke/government.pdf/paragraph\(149\)](http://www.efm.bris.ac.uk/het/locke/government.pdf/paragraph(149))

³⁴² Ibid.

and oppression from indifferent legislators, petty tyrants of special interest groups and would-be tin pot dictators who hold power in civil society. In the postmodern context, liberty is just one aspect of individual empowerment, opening up the possibility for freedom to reassert itself in the political debate.

In essence, primary democracy, through the institution of the Democratic Digital Assembly, allows the citizen of a postmodern society a forum to exercise the natural right to create and execute postmodern natural law, fulfilling their individual political rights, duties and social obligations in a practical and pragmatic manner, forging a relationship between the individuals of the state, and all made possible only through the existence of this fourth branch of power, the digital estate.

One is now confronted by two specific questions: What deliberative instrument is used to best define the parameters or content of this postmodern natural law? From what venue or institution does this postmodern natural law originate?

The answer to the first question is *public reason*. And an institution called the *Digital Political Forum* is the answer to the second question.

The Democratic Digital Assembly, Supported by Public Reason and a Digital Political Forum

There are two specific structural dimensions that make up the *democratic digital assembly* and the *digital political forum*. On the one hand, there is the external construction of the democratic digital assembly and the digital political forum itself with the digital estate. On the other, there is the internal construction of the democratic digital assembly and the digital political forum, expressing in detail the characteristics and deliberative properties required for a political process that is capable of turning a “political conception” into a postmodern natural law.

The postmodern institution of the democratic digital assembly is where primary democracy recognizes the natural right³⁴³ of every individual of the human race to create and execute postmodern natural law and legislation. Within the walls of this digital structure, forged from the existence of the digital estate, the individual of postmodern society must decide by a direct and democratic tradition which postmodern natural laws will become legitimate law—the ideal of public reason, guiding the direction of the state and its many appendages into the future—while discarding those that do not meet the threshold of legitimacy, returning them to the citizenry of the state for further discussion and debate.

It is in this process of direct and democratic decision-making, based upon procedures of voting that involve majority rule when verifying and executing postmodern natural law, that one finds the underlying guiding principle of this postmodern institution and its sister

³⁴³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_and_legal_rights

institution of the digital political forum, which is central to the political idea of primary democracy: the idea of public reason.³⁴⁴

The digital political forum is the platform from on which political conceptions are debated, discussed, refined and then eventually brought forth to the democratic digital assembly as postmodern natural law. The digital political forum also serves as the dais from which the idea of public reason specifies at the deepest level the basic moral and political values that are to determine a constitutional democratic government's relationship to its citizens and their relationship to one another.³⁴⁵

In order to understand how the democratic digital assembly and the digital political forum are constructed within the digital estate, it will first be necessary to evaluate the work of Jurgen Habermas, in particular *Theory of Communicative Action Vol. I & II* and *Between Facts and Norms*.

With his work as a guide, it becomes possible to set down the structural framework within the digital estate that is required not only for the democratic digital assembly to exist, but also for the digital political forum to properly function as a deliberative platform where political conceptions are forged into postmodern natural law propositions that eventually make their way to the democratic digital assembly.

Then, through a proper reading and analysis of the modern philosopher John Rawls and his various works, *A Theory of Justice*, *Political Liberalism* and *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*, one will be able to see clearly how the modern concept of public reason is successfully incorporated into the postmodern political idea of primary democracy.

It must be stated here that, for some, the idea of public reason is a nonstarter. Some believe there is no such thing as public reason. For them there exists nothing between the concepts of truth and consent; it is an either or proposition. But this is not, in my opinion, a valid argument. To ignore the role that public reason plays in either the modern or postmodern era, with its input into the political decision-making process of the individual, would be akin to denying the individual empowering attributes found in democracy itself. Public reason not only exists, but is the central, inner, postmodern, philosophical pillar that holds up the entire edifice of the concept of primary democracy.

In summary then, one can see that by combining the work of these two modern philosophers, one is able to begin to understand how the primary source of the power of the digital estate, its content, and its information are accumulated, analyzed, distributed and utilized within the digital estate and in society, how they are resourced into the institutions of primary democracy, and how, then, the individual contributes to this power as its secondary component, bringing to life the postmodern natural law from its political conception.

³⁴⁴ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/public-reason/>

³⁴⁵ Rawls, John. *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*. *University of Chicago Law Review*. University of Chicago. Vol. 64. No. 3. 1997. p. 766.

It is not the purpose of this work to describe in great detail the technical engineering required of the digital estate to produce a fully functioning, postmodern, digital political system; such an endeavour will require a work all unto itself. This essay will instead confine itself to a limited investigation of Jurgen Habermas and his theory of communicative action,³⁴⁶ for it is *his* theory upon which the external construction of a democratic digital assembly and a digital political forum within the digital estate rest.

This short essay will endeavour to produce and offer the reader an interpretation of those areas and aspects of a theory of communicative action that are specifically relevant and required for the basic philosophical and intellectual underpinnings of this theory and how it relates to the postmodern political idea of primary democracy.

In many respects, the work of Jurgen Habermas is integral to the concepts and postmodern philosophical construction of primary democracy. As Thomas A. McCarthy points out, the theory of communicative action has three interrelated concerns: to develop a concept of rationality that is no longer tied to, and limited by, the subjective and individualistic premises of modern philosophy and social theory; to construct a two-level concept of society that integrates the lifeworld and systems paradigms; and finally, to sketch out, against this background, a critical theory of modernity that analyzes and accounts for its pathologies in a way that suggest a redirection rather than an abandonment of the project of Enlightenment.³⁴⁷

As Habermas himself points out, if we assume that the human race maintains itself through the socially coordinated activities of its members and that this coordination is established through communication—and, in certain spheres of life, through communication aimed at reaching agreement—then the reproduction of the race also requires satisfying the conditions of a rationality inherent in communicative action.³⁴⁸

It is around this relationship surrounding communication, specifically rationality, society and law, that primary democracy builds upon.

Rationality. The theory of communicative action is primarily a theory of rationality, an attempt to rescue the claims of reason once advanced by encompassing metaphysical systems (such as that of Thomas Aquinas), philosophies of history (such as G. W. F. Hegel's), or philosophies of consciousness (such as Kant's).³⁴⁹ It is also interpreted as a postmetaphysical term, not to be confused with postmodern.³⁵⁰

While not necessary for the construction of the democratic digital assembly, the exterior interface of the digital political forum requires a structure of rationality that is not

³⁴⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Theory_of_Communicative_Action

³⁴⁷ Habermas, Jurgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol. I. Boston: Beacon Press. 1984. p. 8.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 397.

³⁴⁹ Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1996. p. xiii.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. xiii.

possible, except for what is found and created within the structure of the digital estate of the postmodern world. Without the digital estate, we would still be left with only the modern idea of practical reason, reason built around converting the Aristotelian conceptual framework to the philosophy of the subject. Moreover, the digital estate allows the detaching of practical reason from its anchors in cultural forms of life and sociopolitical orders, and the idea of history.³⁵¹

The scope of Habermas's theory of communicative action is societal in nature, providing the necessary platform and the proper definition of rationality that can be used politically by primary democracy. Communicative reason differs from practical reason first and foremost in that it is no longer ascribed to the individual actor or to a macrosystem at the level of the state or the whole of society.³⁵²

Society. Another important aspect to understanding the correlation between the digital estate and primary democracy in Habermas's theory is the similarity found in the way each views the idea of society. Habermas sees his theory resulting from the combination of two specific avenues of the study of society. From one point of view, society is conceptualized as the lifeworld of a social group in which actions are coordinated through harmonizing action orientations. From the second point of view, society is conceptualized as a self-regulating system in which action are coordinated through functional interconnections of action consequences.³⁵³

Within the postmodern structure of primary democracy, the forms of communication that confer legitimacy on political will-formation, legislation, and the administration of justice appear as part of a greater encompassing process in which the lifeworlds of modern societies are rationalized under the pressure of systemic imperatives.³⁵⁴

Within the digital estate and the pragmatic process of decision-making found in primary democracy, these two aspects of society are successfully integrated into one concept. Within the democratic digital assembly, one realizes the internalist perspective of the participant, while in the digital forum, one sees the externalist perspective of the observer.

Law. Which brings us to Jurgen Habermas's concept of modern law: an account of certain features of modern societies; a distinction between communicative and strategic action; and an account of communicative action in terms of validity claims that must be vindicated in discourses of different types.³⁵⁵ Inherent to this interpretation of modern law is the attempt of primary democracy to create the proper forum that can realize this definition.

Specifically, when combining the idea of communicative action and Habermas's idea of

³⁵¹ Ibid. p. 1.

³⁵² Ibid. p. 3.

³⁵³ Ibid. p. 30.

³⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 5.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. p. xix.

modern law to the postmodern political idea of primary democracy, the structure of the democratic digital assembly and the digital political forum attempts to maintain his dual character of law in such a way that the structure of primary democracy recognizes that the creation of postmodern natural law is examined from both normative and empirical perspectives, both as a “system of knowledge” (or a set of public norms) and as a “system of actions” (or set of institutions) embedded in a social context.³⁵⁶

Furthermore, the overriding principle behind the external construction of the digital political forum necessary for the proper functioning of the democratic digital assembly is based upon Habermas’s discourse theory of deliberative democracy and his idea of the “discourse principle.” The digital political forum, in its construction within the digital estate, attempts to incorporate the discourse principle, defined as a rule of action or choice justified, and therefore valid, only if all those affected by the rule or choice can accept it in a reasonable discourse.³⁵⁷

With the links between Jurgen Habermas’s theory of collective action and primary democracy explained, and the exterior structure of both institutions of primary democracy defined, one can now look specifically at the internal structure of the democratic digital assembly and that of the digital political forum.

The democratic digital assembly, the people’s postmodern legislature, is where the postmodern natural laws of society are either accepted or rejected by the people themselves, and is best characterized by what John Rawls would define as participating in the exercise of ideal public reason.³⁵⁸ Unlike Rawls’s modern interpretation of this ideal of public reason realized through the actions of legislators—judges, chief executives, government officials and candidates for public office—the postmodern interpretation of this ideal form of public reason is exercised by the individual when deciding, by direct majority vote, whether or not to accept or reject the natural law brought forth to the democratic digital assembly.

This brings us to two specific questions: Where does this natural law originate? How does one find their way toward the ideal of public reason from the idea of public reason? The answer to both questions is the Digital Political Forum.

Within the digital political forum, the idea of a political conception first finds form and function through a process of deliberation and discussion founded upon the idea of public reason described in John Rawls’s work, *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*. As Rawls points out, the form and content of this reason, the way it is understood by citizens and how it interprets their political relationship, is part of the idea of democracy itself.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ Ibid. p. xxiv.

³⁵⁷ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/habermas/#HabDisThe>

³⁵⁸ Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1996. p. 768.

³⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 765.

Secondly, this internal structure of the digital political forum is supported by his idea of an *overlapping consensus* described in both a *Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*, whereby the defining characteristics of a political conception are agreed to, eventually leading to its arrival in the democratic digital assembly for ratification.

Central to Rawls's idea of public reason is that it neither criticizes nor attacks any comprehensive doctrine, religious or nonreligious, except insofar as that doctrine is incompatible with the essentials of public reason and a democratic polity.³⁶⁰ Within the digital public forum this open debate is structurally reinforced by the exterior construction of the digital public forum by its use of Habermas's discourse theory of deliberative democracy.

In deciding how a political conception is to be structured as it makes its way to the democratic digital assembly, the public debate within the digital political forum requires that the discussion be structured so that it preserves the five core aspects of public reason: from the fundamental political questions to which it applies; the persons to whom it applies (government officials and candidates for public office); its content as given by a family of reasonable political conceptions of justice; the application of these conceptions in discussions of coercive norms to be enacted in the form of legitimate law for a democratic people; and citizens' ability to check that the principles derived from their conceptions of justice satisfy the criterion of reciprocity.³⁶¹

The purpose of such structuring within the digital political forum is to allow for the greatest possible discussion, debate and argumentation of any given political conception, providing the proper organization and structure of the content within the political conception through an amending process whereby the intent of the political conception acquires its refinement and meaning, a meaning that is not required to incorporate the whole truth. A zeal to embody the whole truth in politics is incompatible with the idea of public reason that belongs with democratic citizenship.³⁶²

In many respects, one can also draw a link between this process of amending within the digital political forum, and Rawls's concept of an overlapping consensus; in its second stage, the idea of an overlapping consensus attempts to explain how, given the plurality of conflicting comprehensive religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines always found in a democratic society,³⁶³ consensus is reached. Such a political device could be used to bring agreement on which amendments should be attached to any political conception. Or as Habermas might say, what one seeks are principles or norms that incorporate generalized interests³⁶⁴ that are required to eventually bring the political conception to the democratic digital assembly for a final vote as a postmodern natural law.

³⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 766.

³⁶¹ Rawls, John. "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited." University of Chicago. *University of Chicago Law Review*. Vol. 64. No. 3. 1997. p. 767.

³⁶² Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1996. p. 767.

³⁶³ Ibid. p. 60.

³⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 61.

Looked at from the perspective of Habermas, this overlapping consensus found within the digital political forum rests on an amalgam of reasons and empirical motives, where reasons differ according to whether they derive from mythic narratives, religious worldviews, or metaphysical doctrines, or whether they are secular in origin, springing from the pragmatic, ethical, or moral use of practical reason.³⁶⁵

Finally, within the internal environment of the digital political forum, the main thrust of Rawls's idea of modern public reason perseveres. When deciding whether or not to forward any political conception to the democratic digital assembly, the ideal of public reason begins its formulation and finds expression if individuals or citizens think of themselves as legislators and ask themselves what statutes, supported by what reasons satisfying the criterion of reciprocity, they would think it most reasonable to enact.³⁶⁶

Despite the fact that there does not today exist any democratic digital assembly or digital political forum anywhere in the West, one can see the beginning if one looks hard enough into the use of the Internet. Already, with the continued expansion in the use and influence of the Internet, it is possible to see the outlines of a digital political forum where public reason is already in use when the subject revolves around politics.

As stated earlier, when trying to develop a viable alternative to the modern leviathan state, those who put forth ideas are faced with the troubling concern that nowhere in the Western world does such an alternative exist, be it the type of limited government espoused by John Locke, or one incorporating a more recent interpretation of modern libertarianism. Those advocating for less control from a centrally organized governing authority have nothing to show in realistic terms for all their intellectual efforts or political critique.

However, the institutions needed for primary democracy have begun to appear. In particular, one can see the beginnings of the democratic digital assembly to the concept of a digital political forum, where political opinions are not just affirmed but debated, discussed and argued, rooted in Internet platforms and websites that show a rudimentary form of public reason, as described by John Rawls.

Since the early years of its existence, the Internet and its effect upon politics has been an intellectual exploration that saw discussion range from wildly optimistic scenarios of a return to Athenian-style direct democracy and empowered citizens, to deeply pessimistic predictions of the rise of push-button democracy and the fragmentation of the public sphere.³⁶⁷

From this initial debate two specific theories have emerged: normalization—a thesis that

³⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 69,

³⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 769.

³⁶⁷ Gibbons, Lusoli and Ward. *Online Participation in the UK*. Political Studies Association. Blackwell Publishing. 2005. p. 561.

states that the net effect of online politics will be to enhance the political stock of those who are already involved, and to reduce the influence of the more uninterested and apathetic,³⁶⁸ and the theory of equalization, which perceives campaigning on the Internet will lead to a situation in which electoral competition between different political actors is more equal than when they campaign solely off-line.³⁶⁹

For many researchers interested in understanding the relationship between the Internet and politics, the question is rather a simple one: Is the Internet just another focusing medium like radio and television, does it reinforce the idea of political parties like radio did in the early part of the 20th century, and does it microscopically focus the dissemination of ideology to the masses, like television did in the recent past? Or is the Internet, with its interactive properties capable of reorientation, empowering those marginal or fringe political organizations at the grassroots level, and looked upon from a macro perspective, reversing the power structure imbedded within modern politics?

There are varying degrees of success regarding the creation of a platform whereby a digital political forum, based on the idea of public reason, is not only fashionable but also functional.

In fact, if one drills down into the research already conducted throughout the West during the first decade of this new century, one would find that the content and form that serves as the foundation of this preliminary postmodern interactive relationship on the Internet mirrors those of political participation between citizens discussed in primary democracy.

In the 2008 book *Digital Citizenship the Internet, Society and Participation*, perhaps the most detailed research on the Internet and its impact on society, the authors attempted to understand the impact of the Internet on civic engagement and politics in America. Although this in-depth study embraced neither the normalization nor the equalization debate, the research shows the positive impact the Internet has had on political participation.

The authors noted the Internet has had highly visible impacts on business and the economy, as well as more subtle but far-reaching effects. There is evidence that information technology has increased productivity and growth while checking inflation rates.³⁷⁰ In political terms, their research showed that in recent years the Internet has become an integral part of campaigns and politics.

Moreover, salient news stories often break first online and are then circulated through listservs, emails and finally the websites of news organizations.³⁷¹ So pervasive now is the Internet in American life that in the course of their work the researchers coined the

³⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 567.

³⁶⁹ <http://www.vasa.abo.fi/users/kistrand/TMP.objres.77.pdf/p.11>

³⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 23.

³⁷¹ Ibid. p. 51.

term *digital citizen*, a term the researchers defined as a person with the ability to participate in society online.³⁷²

In terms of the American political experience, where civic engagement is at the heart of republican virtue, for it offers the foundation of long-term political participation,³⁷³ the researchers define civic engagement as a multifaceted concept consisting of political interest, political discussion, and political knowledge.³⁷⁴ The Internet is the leading communication frontier in expanding this civic republicanism.

This political interest, discussion and knowledge of the Internet creates the foundation for a future digital platform encapsulated within the idea of primary democracy.

The political interest found on the Internet could be interpreted as public reason, the basic moral and political values that determine a constitutional democratic government's relationship to its citizens and their relationship to one another. Also, it can be argued that research has established a positive link between Internet use and participation, including voter turnout.³⁷⁵ In essence, the authors found that the Internet reinforced this republican virtue rather than undermining it.

Another area of particular interest revealed in their research is the formation of a process of interaction needed to establish the foundation of primary democracy. In the course of their research, they noted three forms of political participation that are currently available on the Internet: reading online political news (mass communication), participating in a political chat room (small group communication), and e-mailing about politics and elections (interpersonal communication). Each form of online communication has a different primary goal (becoming informed, social discourse, and mobilization).³⁷⁶

Is it coincidental that these three forms of political participation are a necessary ingredient to the creation of the digital political forum required by primary democracy? How far would one have to go before a platform of all three incorporated into one exists? There is already evidence of such a forum.

Truly, how much work would it take to incorporate the Internet's interactivity, diversity, flexibility, speed, convenience, low cost, and information capacity potential, and allow the public to become more knowledgeable about politics and government on one specific platform or forum?³⁷⁷

Many academics have already conceived of a site that could incorporate all three levels of interaction. However, instead of expanding the Internet, many, like Cass Sunstein in the early days of the Internet, argued for regulation. He even argued that the state should help

³⁷² Mossberger, K. et al. *Digital Citizenship Internet, Society and Participation*. MIT Press. 2008. p. 1.

³⁷³ Ibid. p. 47.

³⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 48.

³⁷⁵ Mossberger, K. et al. *Digital Citizenship Internet, Society and Participation*. MIT Press. 2008. p. 49.

³⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 67.

³⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 52.

create “town halls” wherein people could debate various issues, and that political websites should require a link on sites espousing alternative views.³⁷⁸

However, with the recent disastrous roll-out of the *Affordable Care Act*’s Internet platform by the federal government of the United States, facilitated through the Department of Health and Human Services, the idea of a modern, government-run website for political purposes has shown just how infeasible such an enterprise is when organized by a modern government, specifically from either a technical or political standpoint.

In Cass Sunstein’s supposition, it is noted that the Internet may in fact *limit* the scope of information and discussion for those who hold similar views, reducing exposure to, and tolerance of, other groups and ideas³⁷⁹ would probably be borne out should a modern government structure of hierarchy and bureaucracy undertake the running of a digital political forum like the one envisioned in the postmodern concept of primary democracy.

However, on the private Internet side of this argument, research shows that Internet sources may be more emotional, richer, and more likely to mobilize involvement in the political process.³⁸⁰ Furthermore, research has shown that online discussions are more frank and egalitarian than face-to face meetings. Women, for example, are less likely to be interrupted in cyber discussions.³⁸¹

With the Internet, one can see the beginnings of a foundation for the digital political forum of primary democracy. As in the postmodern world described within these pages, the Internet is showing signs of a rationale on which citizens rest their political justifications, and support of laws and policies are forged, a set of laws and policies that invoke the coercive powers of government concerning fundamental political questions.³⁸² There can be little doubt that public reason is also a cornerstone of the political life of the Internet itself.

Finally, four important footnotes about the Internet and political participation in America:

1. There is added value in more information about civic engagement; research shows citizens are exposed to salient ballot measures (initiatives and referenda), and associated media campaigns have increased political knowledge.³⁸³

³⁷⁸ Healy, Kieran. “Digital Technology and Cultural Goods.” *The Journal of Political Philosophy*. Vol. 10. 2002. p. 483.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 49.

³⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 53.

³⁸¹ Ibid. p. 52.

³⁸² Rawls, John. “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited.” *University of Chicago Law Review*. University of Chicago. Vol. 64. No. 3. 1997. p. 795.

³⁸³ Mossberger, K. et al. *Digital Citizenship Internet, Society and Participation*. MIT Press. 2008. p. 54.

2. Research shows that public reason constitutes part of the deliberation process regarding civil participation; like other forms of media, the Internet provides individuals with information that facilitates discussion. Information obtained from the media encourages political dialogue.³⁸⁴
3. Citizens using online political information are more likely to be knowledgeable about politics, interested in politics, and are occupied with discussions about politics more frequently.³⁸⁵
4. The Internet provides individuals with information that fosters discussion.³⁸⁶ Consuming political information online increases interest in politics over time.³⁸⁷

To expand our understanding of the Internet and the role it plays in political discourse, look at the research regarding the issues of “normalization” or “equalization” in the United Kingdom.

In *Online Participation in the UK: Testing a “Contextualized” Model of Internet Effects*, the authors show that in the United Kingdom there is evidence to support the theory that the Internet is expanding the numbers of the politically active, specifically in terms of reaching groups that are typically inactive or less active in conventional or offline forms of politics.

In Continental Europe, the scale of the argument tips in favour of the theory of equalization as well. This trend toward empowering the politically disadvantaged is most empirically evidenced in Finland, with its partially individualistic, candidate-centred election system and corresponding campaign culture, as well as the lack of restrictions regarding the purchase of TV campaign advertisements.³⁸⁸

The only outlier in the wilderness of the Western world where the Internet has little effect upon political participation would seem to be found in Canada. Even though there is heavy Internet accessibility for much of the population, a recent study of Canadian political engagement and the role of the Internet would seem to reinforce the theory of normalization.³⁸⁹

Like most other people of the West, Canadians use multiple information and communication media to gather information about political issues and to voice their

³⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 55.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 60.

³⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 61.

³⁸⁸ <http://www.vasa.abo.fi/users/kistrand/TMP.objres.77.pdf/p.24>

³⁸⁹ <http://www.canadianinternetproject.ca/en/docs/CanadaOnlineFinalEnglishVersion10302005.pdf/p.5>

opinions and concerns;³⁹⁰ the Internet is just one outlet. But the impact of the Internet on political discourse and participation is hard to verify.

The problem of Canadian online political participation seems not to be found within the numbers of users; even though in 2007 nearly 63.7% of Canadian home Internet users went online to read news or sports, there is scant evidence to show that this translated into *new* political participation. The main political parties at both the federal and provincial levels remained unchallenged, their policies and ideology setting the tone and agenda of any online political debate.

More problematic is the fact that the participation rate of Internet users in Canada shows a very troubling statistic, that of Internet use by Aboriginals. Since many First Nations communities suffer poverty, educational disadvantages and a distinct lack of adequate telecommunications service, it is safe to assume that First Nations are overrepresented in the category of Internet “nonusers.”³⁹¹

In conclusion, then, some casual points of interest. The research does show that both the philosophical foundation and a more realistic physical infrastructure for an idea like primary democracy has already begun to take root in America, and when looked upon from a larger perspective, is forging a more permanent foundation within Western society in general.

One promising argument, not fully articulated in the research or in the preceding paragraphs, that can be brought forward in regard to political participation on the Internet, or the possibility of the existence of any future digital political forum, is that it will engage the youth. Although sketchy, it can be concluded from the scientific research produced from these studies, that the Internet is overtly used by younger generations.

The Internet has become an important source of election news for all ages, but young people go online for political news at higher rates than do older people. Nearly a third of those aged 18 to 29 say they got most of their election news online in 2004, up from 22% in November 2000,³⁹² while only 21% of those aged 30 to 49, and smaller percentages of older people got most of their election news from the Internet.³⁹³

Further, the Internet differs from previous forms of mass media because it is both a two-way network of communication *and* a medium for information;³⁹⁴ it requires activity rather than passivity from the user. Whereas television exposes the passive viewer to

³⁹⁰Veenhof et al. *How Canadians' Use of the Internet Affects Social Life and Civic Participation*. Statistics Canada. 2008. p. 14.

³⁹¹http://www2.brandonu.ca/library/cjns/21.2/cjns21no2_pg191-215.pdf/BridgingCanada'sDigitalDivide/p.193

³⁹²Ibid. p. 63.

³⁹³Ibid. p. 63.

³⁹⁴Ibid. p. 69.

political content, the Internet user must actively seek out the information he or she desires from a plethora of choices.³⁹⁵

Finally, one can clearly see a connection between the Internet and public reason; citizens learn and profit from debate and argument, and when their arguments follow public reason, they instruct society's political culture and deepen their understanding of one another even when agreement cannot be reached.³⁹⁶

*Primary Democracy, the Digital Citizen and Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto*³⁹⁷

Historically, innovation in telecommunications technology has prompted speculation on how democratic participation will be affected. The values of civic republicanism have long coloured debates over the public merit of technologies that promote new forms of mass communication, such as radio and television. We are at such a crossroads with the Internet.³⁹⁸

The time has come in the Western world to not only acknowledge the pragmatic and practical application of the Internet, but also its postmodern philosophical foundation. When the mind of the individual living in the 21st century finally wraps the practical with the postmodern philosophical, when the political possibilities of being a "digital citizen" are combined with the postmodern power found within the digital estate, it could then be said that we live in a new enlightened age, rather than an age of enlightenment.³⁹⁹

Primary democracy also adheres to and fulfills the philosophical requirements of postmodernism with the linkage of today's digital estate with Locke's original state of nature; as Lyotard states, postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and thus this state is constant.⁴⁰⁰ *Post modern* would have to be understood according to the paradox of future (post) and anterior (modo).⁴⁰¹

The postmodern, then, is a repetition of the modern as the "new," and this means the ever-new demand for another repetition.⁴⁰² Primary democracy clearly offers a new political system based upon prior incantations and structures.

In an age where wealth is based on information, and with power emanating from the knowledge of the individual, the world is slowly showing itself for what it truly is—a world of communication. *Government* in the past has always been nothing more than the

³⁹⁵ <http://www.vasa.abo.fi/users/kistrand/TMP.objres.77.pdf/p.16>

³⁹⁶ Rawls, John. "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited." *University of Chicago Law Review*. University of Chicago. Vol. 64. No. 3. 1997. p. 799.

³⁹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salus_populi_suprema_lex_esto

³⁹⁸ Rawls, John. p. 69.

³⁹⁹ <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>

⁴⁰⁰ Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minnesota Press. 1984. p. 79.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 81.

⁴⁰² <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/postmodernism/>

managing of information, and *postmodern government* is nothing more than the way information and communication is managed on a larger scale. The postmodern political structures and institutions formed by the idea of primary democracy were created for the purpose of communicating ideas and desires with others.

In understanding the structure of this new postmodern government, it becomes expedient to look at this structure from the origin of power, and how it is then exercised and distributed throughout the system. So we start where power resides, with the individual.

In philosophical terms, primary democracy takes the modern definition of the digital citizen, put forth in the work *Digital Citizenship, the Internet Society and Participation*, as an individual participating online, and expands this simple definition by placing power in the hands of the individual through the creation of postmodern natural law, basing this new power on the concept of public reason found in the two main institutions of primary democracy: *the democratic digital assembly* and *the digital forum*.

Within the digital forum, the digital citizen and public reason combine to form the basis from which all postmodern natural law of society is created. The digital citizen of primary democracy not only participates in society online, but that online participation establishes a new form of political power; a necessary first step to establishing a basis of political reasoning that all can share as free and equal citizens⁴⁰³ with the intended goal of seeking out public justification for a new set of laws, which acts as a guidepost for all postmodern political, social and private institutions.

The digital forum, with its foundation on the concept of *public reason*, is further redefined; the individual is now imbued with a set of postmodern political freedoms, has the democratic right to participate in the creation of postmodern natural law, and is invested with new individual social obligations toward his or her fellow citizens.

Furthermore, this new digital citizen encompasses any individual living in a society with a “digital estate,” and recognizes that the Internet is simply *one* component found within the digital estate, that the “digital citizen,” or in the case of primary democracy, all individuals, are endowed with these new postmodern political freedoms, postmodern natural laws and social obligations, which are directly linked to the existence of the digital estate. Finally, this definition of a digital individual within the context of primary democracy realizes that political participation is the least possible outcome for anyone engaging or interacting in this postmodern political environment.

Once a “political conception” has been sufficiently discussed, debated and refined, it is ready to be taken to the people for acceptance or rejection. By combining the three general areas of Internet politics—**intra-net politics**, which exist within the Internet with no connection to the real world; **politics that affect the net**, actions taken offline that regulate the online environment, and **political use of the Internet**, online activity with the purpose of affecting offline politics, or affecting offline traditional political actors

⁴⁰³ Rawls, John. “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited.” *University of Chicago Law Review*. University of Chicago. Vol. 64. No. 3. 1997. p. 799.

such as parties, candidates, government and interest groups⁴⁰⁴ —with the exercise of ideal public reason through a system of direct democratic decision-making, the individual freedoms, natural laws and social obligations found in the postmodern philosophical foundation of the digital estate are realized within the *democratic digital assembly*.

Primary democracy leaves the legislature of the state in the hands of the elected representative, allowing them to concern themselves with the running of the government. By combining the two aspects of representational democracy—pluralistic competition among parties and individuals for all positions of government power and the participation of citizens in selecting their representatives through free elections⁴⁰⁵ —with a democratic digital assembly to which all postmodern natural laws must come for validation, an avenue is available for natural legislation to find its way to the people should the representative find it necessary to legislate in such an area.

Conjoined, the postmodern representative legislature, confined to those areas encompassing security, defense and regulation, and the postmodern democratic digital assembly limited to natural law, each half of government, the modern and postmodern now forming a continuous democratic circle, the digital citizen remains politically engaged with all aspects of the postmodern political world. Each half of postmodern government keeps encouraging citizens to engage in the politics of principle, debating which of the existing political parties best express their collective ideas, working to revise those ideals to change with the times, and forming coalitions when no single party gains the majority,⁴⁰⁶ then taking such platforms to the people for their approval or rejection as a part of its ongoing exercise in self-definition.⁴⁰⁷

Where once it was the responsibility of the modern legislature to oversee not only the running of the state and its government, the legislature in this postmodern environment finds itself encumbered only by the authority to see through the proper functioning of its aspects of postmodern authority. From the confines of the postmodern legislature an executive authority is elected and is involved solely in the crafting of regulation, fostered with the responsibility of measuring and investigating the accountability of government and the postmodern state, maintaining a stable foreign policy, and administering all areas of government that relate to security and national defense.

From the legal perspective, this new postmodern government would be served by a dual track judicial system. On the one hand, the modern system would continue forth with its adjudication over all civil, contract, and criminal matters, while on the other hand, a new system of postmodern natural law would be housed in a separate system designed solely to ensure that any and all natural laws passed are not only legitimate and not in conflict with any other laws in the nation, but also that these postmodern natural laws are properly employed and furnished throughout society.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 10.

⁴⁰⁵ <http://www.vasa.abo.fi/users/kistrand/TMP.objres.77.pdf/p.11>

⁴⁰⁶ Ackerman, Bruce. "The New Separation of Powers." *Harvard Law Review*. Vol. 13. No. 3. 2000. p. 662.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 666.

Overarching this new power structure within the state would be a Constitution Court, reminiscent of its modern predecessor, but one whose jurisdiction would now include all areas within the new political governing structure, from overseeing the area of power abdicated by the modern representative legislature—now the purview of the postmodern democratic digital assembly—to the proper functioning of the digital forum and the creation of postmodern natural law out of a “political conception.” It is the responsibility of the Constitutional Court to ensure that all aspects conform to the constitution laws, and human and civil rights exist for the protection of the individual, and for the safe, secure and democratic functioning of the state.

In conclusion, in a postmodern world filled with political problems, the people deserve postmodern solutions. Civic engagement and republican virtues are accelerated by primary democracy. It also utilizes the efficiency and accessibility found in the postmodern information age of a technologically advanced digital civilization to allow everyone the ability to follow his or her own will without injuring or subverting that of their friend or neighbour, living up to the motto of *Salus Populi Suprema Lex Est*.

In the following essays, much of what has been presented here will be discussed further and expanded upon to allow the reader greater insight into this novel political idea and system. But, as seen in this rudimentary introduction, although the individual has increased his or her influence within society and now has the right to create postmodern natural law and legislation, there remains a need to discuss other public issues and community objectives.⁴⁰⁸

To understand what these issues and objectives could be, the following essays go slightly beyond what has already been touched upon. But regardless of this dual track of inquiry, the next logical step down this new path of enlightenment is to more thoroughly define the concepts of postmodern natural law and legislation.

⁴⁰⁸ <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>

THE FOUNDATION OF CIVILIZED SOCIETY: LAW

The Individual Natural Right to Create Postmodern Natural Law & Legislation

There is no other concept or idea that has more influence and importance to civilization than law. Without law, the individual is incapable of existing in relative peace and tranquility with his or her neighbours. When law breaks down or becomes obtuse and loses its meaning, so too does civilized human society. But what really is law? Or, more important to this discussion, what is postmodern natural law and legislation? There have been many definitions of law over the years, some are still in use, while other definitions and interpretations have fallen out of favour. And this is no less true with the concept of natural law as well.

It will therefore be necessary to first focus on the concept of postmodern natural law from natural legislation. Second, it will be necessary to create a theoretical foundation of law itself, placing this foundation within a methodological structure.

A social science, such as analytical or sociological jurisprudence, seeks to describe, analyze, and explain some object or subject matter. This object is constituted by human actions, practices, habits, dispositions and by human discourse.⁴⁰⁹ While this is the first step in creating a methodological base for the concept of law, it can also form a foundation to the definition and structure of natural law.

But these actions, practices, etc., can be fully understood only by understanding their point, that is to say their objective, their value, their significance or importance, as conceived by the people who perform them, engage in them, etc. And these conceptions of point, value, significance, and importance will be reflected in the discourse of those same people, in the conceptual distinctions they draw and fail to, or refuse to, draw. Moreover, these actions, practices, etc., and correspondingly these concepts, vary greatly from person to person, from one society to another, from one time and place to other times and places.⁴¹⁰

When the statements forming the foundation are set side by side and looked upon together, either by a social scientist or a philosopher, they ring no less true in understanding what law is than when trying to conceive and understand the concept of natural law in a postmodern context.

“Natural law.” To some, this is an oxymoron. The word “natural” can evoke ideas of nature and the natural world, while the word “law” may initially conjure thoughts of governments of man.⁴¹¹ From the ancient Greek understanding of natural law in the writings of Plato and Aristotle⁴¹² to a modern interpretation of natural law theory, the

⁴⁰⁹ Finnis, John. *Natural Law and Natural Rights*. New York: Clarendon Press. 1977. p. 3.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. p. 4.

⁴¹¹ Wallin, Alex E. “John Finnis’s Natural law theory and a critique of the Incommensurable Nature of Basic Goods.” *Campbell Law Review* vol.35, Issue 1/2012/p.59

⁴¹² Ibid. p. 60.

underlying premise of natural law has not changed; in both cases natural law is seen as being held within the confines of its definition, “a sort of *a priori* intuitive knowledge of objective moral value and an objective standard of right and wrong [that is] independent of individual conscience.”⁴¹³

While this statement gives the reader a general historical idea of how natural law was conceived and understood over the years, there are still many differing interpretations of what constitutes a late modern understanding of natural law.

For instance, in the 1970s, natural law was modified in its definition with the sociological undermining of the normativism of modern natural-law theory,⁴¹⁴ A new perspective of natural law that confronted the old problem of how the rational project of a just society, in abstract contrast to an obtuse reality, can be realized after confidence in the dialectic of reason and revolution, played out by Hegel and Marx as a philosophy of history, has been exhausted. Only the reformist path of trial and error remains both practically available and morally reasonable.⁴¹⁵

Thus, just as in the concept of natural law found change as it worked its way from an ancient, modern and late modern philosophical foundation, natural law will once again be forced to undergo a drastic transformation through primary democracy.

As stated in an earlier essay, one of the consequences of interpreting a natural right that proclaims the equal right to be free for men and women alike through the existence of a digital estate is that it creates the possibility of legally accessing and politically defining certain specific aspects of pre-political natural law in John Locke’s concept of man’s original state of nature, in his work the *Two Treatises of Government*.

When this pre-political original state is linked to its symmetrical political condition found in the digital estate in a postmodern context, it not only empowers the individual to shape his or her path through the various systems, networks and organizations that make up postmodern society, but it also provides the opportunity for the individual to shape the character of society in general, all through the legal instrument of postmodern natural law.

In many ways, postmodern natural law involves itself in an intricate dance between law, justice and democracy. In one respect, postmodern natural law once again encourages us to look at the shortcomings of positive law.⁴¹⁶ In another, it obliges us to reconsider the nature and definition of justice one would be willing to accept in a postmodern world. All the while, the entire postmodern concept of primary democracy forces us to re-examine the expanded role that democracy plays in society and one’s relationship with the democratic process itself.

⁴¹³ Ibid. p.61.

⁴¹⁴ Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1996. p. 56.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. p. 57.

⁴¹⁶ Kessler, Friedrich. “Natural Law, Justice and Democracy.” Yale Law School: Faculty Scholarship Series paper 2730. 1944. p. 32.

Postmodern natural law creates within a postmodern society a new and dynamic relationship between the individual and the democratic process. From a democratic standpoint, the creation of postmodern natural law does not necessarily come from the combining of any moral or ethical dimension of modern natural law with its postmodern equivalent. Rather, postmodern natural law comes from the creation of a postmodern political process that aligns itself with an idea of democratic trial and error, a process begun in the digital political forum with a “political conception” constructed and forged by consensus and public reason. It eventually finds fruition in the democratic digital assembly, with the acceptance or rejection of this political conception as postmodern natural law by direct majority vote, expressed and auctioned in what John Rawls would call the ideal of public reason.

As a consequence of this postmodern democratic political process, the postmodern interpretation or foundation of natural law loses most of its modern foundational aspects, going from a modern interpretation founded upon moral or ethical knowledge and understanding to a postmodern definition strictly viewed as having only political value.

From the perspective of law, this postmodern natural law and its political value creates new avenues of definition and interpretation for positive law that are not necessarily associated with or recognized in the West in regard to their origin from a modern legislative process. Postmodern natural law, within the idea of primary democracy, allows for these new foundational parameters and still maintains its characteristics in such a manner that it can be considered and spoken of both as a social fact of power and practice, *and* as a set of reasons for action normative for reasonable people addressed by them.⁴¹⁷

It must be noted here that even though this postmodern natural law residing within the confines of the digital estate takes upon itself a political value, maintaining a certain moral or ethical position is possible as it works its way from the point of a political conception in the digital political forum to the democratic digital assembly. From certain perspectives this may not be a bad thing, since politics without the [modern] natural law as an ethical basis finds ultimate expression in the absolute or totalitarian state, which denies the traditional determinants of morality and makes the fiat of the state the moral law.⁴¹⁸

Taken another way, people have always had to follow some code of behaviour long before man had the concept of law.⁴¹⁹ From these rules laid down by primitive human tribes to the complex and intricate laws and legislation that have been passed by the modern representative democratic state over the years, we can see clearly that we in the postmodern era actually exist both in and by a natural law governing authority.

This governing natural law extends from John Locke’s pre-political original state of man

⁴¹⁷ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natural-law-theories/>

⁴¹⁸ Kessler, Friedrich. “Natural Law, Justice and Democracy.” Yale Law School: Faculty Scholarship Series paper 2730. 1944. p. 34.

⁴¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law,_Legislation_and_Liberty

to today's postmodern natural law, a natural law that in either its pre-modern or postmodern interpretation is crafted by our social norms and traditions. Jurgen Habermas would necessarily see this new postmodern positive law as deliberative democracy. And, as he puts it, without the view of law as an empirical action system, philosophical concepts remain empty.⁴²⁰

As stated earlier, some specific examples of areas of interest to postmodern natural law would include such pre-political notions as life, health, and education, in accordance with what one would find in the work of John Locke. But due to the fact that ours is a postmodern society, postmodern natural law would now also encompass, but is not limited to, such areas of interest as setting an appropriate level for the taxation of property, setting a reasonable limit on individual autonomy or independence, and reflexively, setting public autonomy. This would also include age-related issues, like determining the parameters of legal and political authority that deal with retirement living, retirement benefits and end of life issues.

Moreover, looking beyond these areas of interest that encompass both the pre-political and postmodern, with an eye toward a more holistic perspective, one can see that these social norms and traditions, and their formation in the democratic digital assembly as legitimate postmodern natural law, present to a postmodern society a new interplay and overlap between postmodern natural law, positive law and democracy, a relationship where one can begin to fashion some formal characteristics, parameters and definition to the concept of justice in a postmodern society.

It is possible to see within the political confines of primary democracy a continuation in the battle between two specific interpretations of justice. The idea of idealism,⁴²¹ as exemplified by Plato and his idea of *objective idealism*, and his firm belief in the existence of absolute values, or, more accurately, his faith in the reality of ideas as the cause of true being and true knowledge,⁴²² the perfect state versus the second-best state.⁴²³ And on the other end of the spectrum, the idea of *positivism*, where law and justice no longer form opposition,⁴²⁴ such that, in contrast to the Republic's philosophy of proclaiming that law should be replaced by justice, law has become the measure of the just and unjust,⁴²⁵ deriving its validity not from the fact that it is based on right reason but that "it is a word by him that by right has command over others."⁴²⁶

However, due to the unique structure of the digital estate and its prevalence throughout society within almost all legal and political jurisdictions, postmodern natural law allows for the concept of justice found within these two solitudes of definition to be refined and

⁴²⁰ Ibid. p. 66.

⁴²¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idealism>

⁴²² Kessler, Friedrich. "Natural Law, Justice and Democracy." Yale Law School: Faculty Scholarship Series paper 2730. 1944. p. 35.

⁴²³ Ibid. p. 39.

⁴²⁴ Ibid. p. 39.

⁴²⁵ Ibid. p. 39.

⁴²⁶ Ibid. p. 39.

codified in ways never thought possible in the modern era. Coming from either the democratic digital assembly as postmodern natural law or from the postmodern representative legislature in the form of postmodern legislation, it ensures a level of specificity and justice never before attainable in the context of rule or regulation.

In many respects, this postmodern structure of natural law and legislation would see, in Hegel's words, the individual's morality (Moralitat) find its ethical (Sittliche) context in the institutions⁴²⁷ of postmodern society.

Because all these dynamics and possible avenues of interplay at work between postmodern law, justice and democracy cannot be properly addressed in an introductory work such as this, *The Foundation of Civilized Society; Law* will only address certain aspects.

In the coming pages, this essay will focus on further defining the perspective of democracy, the postmodern institution of the *democratic digital assembly* and its sister institution of the *digital political forum* to allow the reader to experience how postmodern natural law and legislation can govern from the individual sphere of every corner and sector of society. Designed with a specific structure embedded within the digital estate itself, these postmodern institutions allow the citizen and individual the opportunity to shape the laws and legislation for those areas within society that have been the purview of the representative for too long.

As for continuing the discussion of the interplay found between postmodern natural law and legislation, and the concept of positive law, the essay will explore in greater detail postmodern natural law and its connection to the digital estate, as combined with John Locke's interpretations of the original state of nature, and natural law in pre-political times. How his idea of natural law encompassed those areas of the political arena that fell outside the realm of state authority also applies to and is evident in the postmodern condition.

Instead of detailing all the possible outcomes and definitions that postmodern natural law and legislation could encompass a simple discussion will explore those areas in which postmodern natural law is *not* applicable

To offer the reader greater insight into the possible postmodern concept of justice and the demands that primary democracy places upon it, the reader will be given the opportunity to participate in a thought experiment to find a postmodern theoretical solution to a modern problem of economic inequality.

The thought experiment is specifically designed so the reader can see that this new postmodern interpretation of justice allows one to move beyond the modern idea of social or distributive justice, giving the postmodern structure of justice an individual base, creating its own postmodern concept that centres around an individual's social obligation that can be attached to the very definition of *any* postmodern natural law and legislation.

⁴²⁷ Kessler. p. 58.

This example should also show that within any possible postmodern concept of justice, this individual social obligation, differs from its modern era equivalent in that it offers the individual recourse and opportunity to shape their own specific relationship with all levels of authority, encompassing all jurisdictions: federal, state, provincial and municipal. This approach is not available in society today, which uses a modern definition of justice bound to a hierarchal top-down governing style. But in a postmodern environment, power accrues from the ground up rather than from the top down.

Taken altogether as a simple outline, this new relationship between postmodern natural law and positive law, justice and democracy should allow the reader to imagine a conceptual foundation upon which a society of all individuals in any walk of life would be empowered to pursue their lives in the manner they see fit, without class, religion, ethnicity, and gender creating artificial barriers in either work or home environments, allowing all to live in a homogenous, peaceful and secure community

Finally, in the last pages of this essay, the modern paradox of private/public autonomy is discussed, with its postmodern equivalent presented as a solution to the nagging problem of detailing the appropriate parameters of individual sovereignty and public responsibility.

The postmodern division between the individual and the collective is further enhanced with a discussion of how the postmodern political democratic structure of primary democracy functions with the remainder of the modern legal structure, a necessary holdout from the modern era. In essence, a suitable postmodern legal system of the state is discussed and detailed.

From the reader I ask for patience. On the one hand, all that has been discussed has yet to be created. And on the other, many will have their own ideas as to how to construct such an edifice of postmodern political power, with concepts like postmodern natural law that are specifically designed to be ever-changing in form and function within the framework of an ever-evolving postmodern society.

Postmodern Natural Law vs. Classical Natural Law

Even in the postmodern world of the West in the second decade of 21st century, there are those who still wield a disproportionate amount of political and legal power over the rest of society, as was the case when the Holy Roman Empire ruled without opposition, where priest and Church kept their knowledge wrapped up in Latin, decipherable only by the few who were to lead the flock to the altar. Just as no one knew then what was being said, or why they were instructed to do things a certain way. today we are beholden to the lawyer, representative legislator and legal adjudicator, who decipher “the law” for us.

These individuals are the new gatekeepers. Like priests of old, they determine the amount of legal information people are required to know; they interpret the needs and direction of

society for all, and discern today's modern sacred truths for all through their legal opinions and legislative agendas.

One of the main purposes of primary democracy is to redistribute the power that those in the legal system possess, partially to relieve them of their duty and responsibility as the keepers of this legal and political power and specifically to ensure that law itself no longer is written in its own language, understandable only to the lawyer trained to understand it, ensuring that this dogmatic barrier no longer exists between the people themselves or between the people and their postmodern government.

In some ways, primary democracy is best understood through a sociological perspective of the political process itself. As Jurgen Habermas points out, the reconstructive analysis, undertaken from the participants perspective of the judge, or client, legislator or citizen, aims at the normative self-understanding of the legal system. That is, a perspective aimed at those ideas and values through which one can explain the claim to legitimacy or the ideal validity of a legal order (or of individual norms).⁴²⁸

However, it is *not* the intention of primary democracy in the course of this redistribution to allow postmodern natural law to specifically be used in creating moral or ethical law, to, for example, shape one's understanding of the afterlife, or how one should conduct one's existence in the here and now.

Yet, it is the classical version of the concept of natural law,⁴²⁹ espoused by many ecclesiastical organizations and people of conscience, which best affords the opportunity to understand the limitations of not only postmodern natural law, but also the role that public reason can play in its creation within the democratic digital assembly and the digital political forum.

The digital political forum and its internal process of turning a political conception into a postmodern natural law, based upon the idea of public reason, remains susceptible to many of the same pitfalls and obstacles faced by the modern representative legislator in any Western state when they attempt to fashion legislation to create a secure and harmonious environment for all to work and prosper in.

In essence, no matter the system, modern or postmodern, there will always be a desire to create a harmonious and just society, whether from specific religious comprehensive doctrines—each claiming a divine right—or from adherence to scripture to solve today's political problems.

As is the case in any Western representative legislature during the process of legislating, a complex web of relationships are amalgamated in the end to create positive law, thereby allowing a situation to naturally arise where some will be unduly burdened with the implementation of these modern laws, regulations and rules. The creation of postmodern natural law will still be presented with this same situation.

⁴²⁸ Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1996. p. 69.

⁴²⁹ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natural-law-ethics/>

If not properly constructed, a form of postmodern natural law could be passed whereby the individual may not have realistic control over the direction of their lives, or worse, postmodern natural law may create an artificial purpose, a false meaning for both the individual and society, appealing to the individual's basest characteristics, crass instincts or desires.⁴³⁰

Another potential problem is that the process itself, despite being grounded upon public reason, could foster a debate infused with the half-truths of ideology, false facts, and a narrative founded on consent by intimidation. As seen in the modern political scene, ideas and intentions regarding the construction of this postmodern natural law could be determined by whimsical and even fanciful ideas that change from year to year based on "new ideas," i.e. new interpretations of old facts; these new idealisms bringing with them future utopias of belief that are neither supported by concrete scientific fact and evidence. Worst of all, postmodern natural laws could be created whose perspective mirrors only those things fashionable to a small minority of society.

Presuming an internal structure to the digital political forum along the lines of John Rawls's conception of public reason, it is pertinent to discuss specific examples of concern raised by the use of public reason. It is necessary to look at the issue of classical natural law, and its role in shaping not only the political process of turning a political conception into postmodern natural law, but also the associated risk of creating postmodern natural law that mirrors classical natural law's interpretations and ideas. Specifically why "*classical natural law reasons are not to become positive postmodern natural law.*"

The issue of classical natural law in the context of the postmodern digital political forum warrants clarification and discussion for many reasons; the issue is relevant on many levels, from that of the individual to the role that civil society is to play within the forum, from the moral and ethical challenges it brings to the differing levels of interpretation and understanding that the individual brings to a deliberative process that is intended and strictly designed to be defined solely as *political* in nature.

In *The Political Ethos of Constitutional Democracy and the Place of Natural Law in Public Reason: Rawls's "Political Liberalism" Revisited*, Martin Rhonheimer shows that there are important points that need to be addressed with John Rawls's use of public reason in determining consensus within the modern political sphere of society, specifically when determining the content and structure of legitimate law. Even though the examples that follow are written and discussed in a modern philosophical context, their meaning and importance can be easily extended into the postmodern concept of primary democracy.

For Martin Rhonheimer, "public reason" can be defined as the kind of reasonableness by which the basic political institutions of society, its legal system and, based on them, concrete lawmaking—legitimately imposed by coercive state power on the multitude of citizens—can be justified in a way that society is able to command general consensus and

⁴³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manufacturing_Consent:_The_Political_Economy_of_the_Mass_Media

that it therefore will not undermine but rather promote social cooperation and assure stability of these basic political and legal institutions.”⁴³¹

Moreover, Martin Rhonheimer sees a clear difference between public reason and classical natural law reasons, insofar as they precede public reason and, thus, shape it in a fundamental way. And since they have this foundational property, he further contends that they cannot claim to be public reasons, adequate for constitutional democracy, simply on the grounds that they are open to everyone’s understanding. Specifically because, first, [classical] natural law embraces more than what is politically relevant and can be reasonably enforced by legal coercion, and, secondly, because [classical] natural law is not positive, written law.⁴³²

It is this dividing line between classical natural law reasons and public reason that must be maintained within the internal structure of the digital political forum as the “political conception” works its way toward becoming postmodern positive natural law.

In order to understand this process within the digital political forum, one must now see that, in the postmodern context, political philosophy has become practical philosophy. Or, as Martin Rhonheimer puts it, “Political philosophy is not metaphysics, which contemplates the necessary order of being, but practical philosophy, which deals with contingent matters and aims at action.”⁴³³

Within the digital political forum, the logic of the political is characterized by acts like framing institutions and establishing legal rules by which not only personal actions but the actions of a multitude of persons are regulated by the coercive force of state power, and by which a part of the citizenry exercises power over others. In the postmodern context, political actions are thus both actions of the whole body politic and refer to the whole of the community of the citizens.⁴³⁴

Within this postmodern context, the idea of criminal law can become overburdened by an individual sense of the moral and ethical. And, as Rhonheimer points out, it is difficult to distinguish moral actions generally from the specifically political,⁴³⁵ since, by its very nature, [classical] natural law encompasses the whole of human life and, inasmuch as it is natural law, it cannot be a criterion for what is to be counted as politically reasonable.⁴³⁶

But does that mean it is impossible to argue for justice within the postmodern system? Certainly not. It just means that any given political conception that forms the content of postmodern natural law needs to avoid certain formulations and constructs. Within the digital political forum, individuals can argue from whatever position they wish. If some

⁴³¹ *The Political Ethos of Constitutional Democracy and the Place of Natural Law in Public Reason: Rawls’s “Political Liberalism”*/Martin Rhonheimer/www.oxforjournals.org Vol.50/2005/p.2

⁴³² *Ibid.* p. 2.

⁴³³ *Ibid.* p. 8.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 8.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 8.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 8.

choose a religious doctrine while others find reassurance in a comprehensive philosophical argument, each would be afforded the opportunity and right to argue from such a position in regard to the disposition of any political conception.

However, putting forth a political conception in the form of classic natural law would be neither politically prudent nor practical. Unlike natural law reasons, public reason is based on the logic of realizability, that is, on the condition of possible consensus and cooperation under conditions of disagreement and conflict. [Classical] natural law reasons that appeal to normative moral truth are precisely not the kind of reasons that are able to settle social conflicts and ideological divergence. On the contrary, they are part of these conflicts and, in some cases, the cause.⁴³⁷

As a natural extension of this line of logic and reasoning, it can also be stated that other forms of classical law, such as Islamist or Shari Law, are not to be considered as a basis for the construction of natural law in a postmodern context. Which brings us to the question: “Why is it imperative that positive postmodern natural law not become a form of or intrude upon interpretations of classical natural law?”

One can also ask, “What type or form of modern law should not be considered postmodern natural law?” Should the area known in the modern context as criminal law be the focus of attention of public reason within the process of creating postmodern natural law? What of the area known as family law?

In determining a proper answer to these and other questions, it is first necessary to determine the political parameters upon which natural law exists within the postmodern context of primary democracy. As stated earlier, even though there is a new and exciting avenue open for individual self-determination in the form of the democratic digital assembly, there still exists a postmodern representative legislature. Even though it becomes a shell of its former self in terms of power and influence, this remnant of the modern era is still a vital and necessary political component of postmodern society.

It is simply impossible for postmodern society to allow every citizen or individual the opportunity to have political input and direction over every aspect of society—there is a certain distance needed between executive authority and the individual of the state when dealing with foreign affairs, for example, the need to keep a measure of secrecy of state surveillance and security concerns available only to the executive authority of the state.

One of the stated purposes of primary democracy is to advance the idea of individual self-determination. But in doing so, it is quite possible to have the opposite effect if the idea of primary democracy, with its postmodern process of formulating postmodern natural law based upon the idea of public reason, is improperly administered.

Such a consequence is quite possible should postmodern natural law overreach overtly

⁴³⁷ Ibid. p. 9.

into those areas of law that require a moral or ethical foundation, such as defining what constitutes a crime in postmodern society, passing judgment on cultural and religious practices, or legislating in those areas of personal discretion and taste for the purposes of instructing appropriate individual behaviour within society.

The criticism of Martin Rhonheimer and his concerns about John Rawls's theories present a firm understanding of the problems created by this overreach, whether it be in a modern or postmodern context, if public reason is allowed to be the sole guiding light in the creation of certain forms of law.

Take, for example, murder. [Classical] natural law commands us not to commit murder because it is intrinsically unjust and contrary to human good. But this alone is not the reason we think it should be reasonably repressed by criminal law. Positive law does not repress certain acts simply because they are immoral or opposed to [classical] natural law. The reason why murder, deliberately homicide, is declared a crime punishable by public authority is a specifically *political* one: it is necessary in order to allow citizens to live together in peace and security and thus prevent society from disintegrating.⁴³⁸

Although many would agree there is a need to maintain such objective moral and ethical standard in a postmodern society, it is possible that in other areas of criminality many would prefer to have positive postmodern legislation. Take, for example, the issue of abortion. For many, due to their personal beliefs or religious faith, abortion should be a crime punishable by public authority. Is it reasonable to allow public reason to be used to create a postmodern natural law outlawing such a practice?

Regardless of how one answers that question, the answer represents a crucial inflection point between the need to maintain postmodern natural law and legislation within the realm of an objective political value, and the need to place a personal moral and ethical value upon one's reasoning within the democratic digital assembly or the digital political forum.

To illustrate, [classical] natural law forbids adultery, sodomy and lying; these are, as natural practical reason states, intrinsically immoral acts. But this does not mean that the [classical] natural law reasons forbidding these acts are also *public* reasons, or that the corresponding moral norms should be legally enforced or corresponding vices repressed by the criminal law,⁴³⁹ or in the case of a postmodern society, natural law.

If one were to allow the substance and definition of postmodern natural law into areas like those mentioned above, one would only sow discord and acrimony, for even in the modern era, it has been shown that it is nearly impossible to come to any reasonable consensus regarding their legitimacy. It therefore requires the hand of a politically objective third party, like the postmodern legislature, to administer and define such areas of postmodern law within a modern interpretation.

⁴³⁸ Rhonheimer, Martin. *The Political Ethos of Constitutional Democracy and the Place of Natural Law in Public Reason: Rawls's "Political Liberalism"*. www.oxforjournals.org. Vol. 50. 2005. p. 47.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 48.

Another example of postmodern natural law overreach or intrusion into an area of jurisprudence best left alone would include the desire by those, who are of a more secular nature,⁴⁴⁰ who might find it appealing to use postmodern natural law to strengthen their interest in keeping the modern era idea of church and state separate.

Just as it was argued earlier that postmodern natural law should not take the shape of moral or ethical teachings, the same argument can be made against those pressing the idea of secularism too far in a postmodern society, a situation whereby the human right of the individual to hold and express a religious conscience or conviction is unjustly infringed upon.

In closing, two other areas that the concept of postmodern natural law should not concern itself with are contract law and tort law. Their modern definition and foundation are such that, over many hundreds of years, their defining characteristics have anchored themselves in law so concretely that it would be best to leave their adjudication and future definition to the legal system of any postmodern society.

Postmodern Natural Legislation and an Example of Individual Social Obligation

As F.A. Hayek points out in *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, “Unlike law itself, which has never been ‘invented’ in the same sense, the invention of legislation came relatively late in the history of mankind. It gave into the hands of men an instrument of great power which they needed to achieve some good, but which they have not yet learned so to control that it may not produce evil.”⁴⁴¹

Examples of this misguided direction of Western representative legislators over-stepping their legitimate boundary and intruding into areas of individual prerogative and choice are evident in almost every Western nation, from banning children from working on their parents’ farm in the United States⁴⁴² to the limiting of political speech during elections,⁴⁴³ from intrusive laws regulating everything in people’s daily lives⁴⁴⁴ to the need of separating children in the public school system from their medication.⁴⁴⁵

Yet, despite disastrous outcomes like a child dying because his asthma inhaler was locked away in the principal’s office when he needed it, these modern legislative intrusions are

⁴⁴⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism>

⁴⁴¹ Hayek, F.A. *Law, Legislation and Liberty Vol. 1 Rules and Order*. p. 72.

⁴⁴² <http://dailycaller.com/2012/04/25/rural-kids-parents-angry-about-labor-dept-rule-banning-farm-chores/>

⁴⁴³ <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/politics/article/1088083--canadians-want-stricter-rules-for-political-ads-poll-says>

⁴⁴⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthnews/9184693/Surgery-bans-elderly-patient-over-her-carbon-footprint.html>

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http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2013/12/08/let_kids_carry_asthma_inhalers_at_school_editorial.html

still viewed by those implementing and advocating for such schemes as a necessary requirement for a just and safe society based on lofty ideals of modern justice.

Furthermore, as these legislative directives have over the years become ever more refined, the legislation of the modern era has taken on a more ideological tone that aligns itself to modern philosophical concepts of social justice⁴⁴⁶ or theories of economic rights.⁴⁴⁷

In relation to postmodern natural law, simple legislation also has the ability to define our relationship to each other and carry with it the weight of influence on the individual. By the penalties it enforces, it teaches us how to treat our fellow human beings. By detailing all the negatives of a relationship, it supposedly teaches us proper behaviour. Thus, as with its modern cousin, postmodern natural legislation also contains the prospect of incorporating the idea of justice into any intended political or legal outcome.

As stated earlier, the modern representative legislature remains part of the governing structure found within any postmodern government. Even though the power and parameters of that power are greatly diminished within it, deferring on many different legal and political levels to the people's democratic digital assembly, it still has the power to bring forth many forms of legislation.

However, any particular legislation brought forth by the modern legislature that in any way falls into the purview of any defining parameter of postmodern natural law within society, would have to be considered postmodern natural legislation, and would not only have to go to a vote before the people in the democratic digital assembly, but would also have to begin its journey within the digital forum for the dual purpose of allowing for a full discussion about the proposed legislation, as well as to provide the opportunity for the citizenry of the postmodern state to offer up amendments to such legislation before it appears as a natural law.

Many questions abound. For starters, "How should one properly define this negative relationship in the postmodern condition?" One can then ask, "How should this negative relationship found between legislation and the individual be corrected or curtailed?" Finally, a question concerning social impact could be asked: "From a postmodern context, how can natural law and legislation be utilized to create a safe, prosperous and harmonious society?"

The answer to each of these questions, in one way or another, revolves around the idea and definition of justice within primary democracy, and what form and shape it would take within the environment of postmodern natural law and legislation. Unlike the modern interpretation of justice, borne out in such concepts as social or distributive justice built around a structure of collective action, primary democracy embraces a concept of justice more individual in nature, creating an individual social obligation to

⁴⁴⁶ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-distributive/>

⁴⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic,_social_and_cultural_rights

not only participate in one's community, but to actively correct any defined injustice found within that community, or, more broadly, society at large.

To fully understand and answer these questions, it would be best to show how primary democracy actually works. But since primary democracy is still just one perspective of the future, it will be necessary to create a simple thought experiment with limited parameters. These parameters begin and end with a view of what it would be like to experience the way primary democracy is intended to work. Between this beginning and ending, the process of a specific piece of legislation is followed as it works its way from the postmodern representative legislature to the digital political forum and, finally, the democratic digital assembly.

In creating this thought experiment a number of other benefits are immediately generated. It allows the philosophical foundation of primary democracy and the various avenues and structures that form the foundation of the digital estate to become manifest in the mind of the reader, while allowing for the role individual social obligation could play within the concept of primary democracy.

It also makes it possible for one to envisage not only the process, but also the transformation such a process would have on a political conception. Finally, it would then be possible to outline in concrete form some of the various aspects that have already been discussed and their impact upon the legislation as it makes its way through the digital forum to the democratic digital assembly where it would be voted upon as a postmodern natural law.

So let us suppose that in the not too distant future a country in the Western world is beset by hyperinflation.⁴⁴⁸ As the consequences of this situation continue over months and then years, those at the bottom end of the economic ladder find themselves staring into the economic abyss; many have lost their jobs as many firms and business have closed due to a lack of business, while those who are on the lowest rung of the economic ladder now find themselves in abject poverty and starvation as food prices rise out of their reach.

Now, if the government of this Western country remains constrained to a structure forged in the status quo, i.e. a political and economic system based on the model of modern representative government and International Investment Law (capitalism), the policy response by those in power would be limited. As most economists know, to try and undo such an extreme economic situation, the only prescription is high interest rates and a tight monetary policy.

Continuing with our thought experiment, let us say for argument's sake that to alleviate the suffering of those most affected by this situation, the government of our modern state puts forth legislation in one of the few areas available to them: a law that would raise the minimum wage of the nation in order to compensate for higher prices.

Now, let us suppose that this same nation in the Western world adheres to the structure of

⁴⁴⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperinflation>

a postmodern governing structure called primary democracy. The introduction of this same law within the postmodern representative legislature by the executive of the state would immediately be recognized as a piece of natural legislation, easily discernible when filtered and seen through John Locke's implied theory of efficiency and individual autonomy. Thus, before it can become legitimate law, it is sent to the digital political forum and is introduced as pending natural legislation.

Within the digital political forum, the pending natural legislation would be parsed out to the various platforms within this specific forum. The legal platform would begin debating the needed legal amendments or consequences of such a law, its search and discussion confined not only to that of the state, but also any international treaties. The economic platform and its various divisions would begin looking into the proposed impact of such legislation not only regarding the economy in general, but also its impact upon every sector and subsector of the economic system. And, finally, the social platform would also begin to assess the law's impact upon society as a whole, forming possible amendments.

It should be noted here that it is within this social platform that alternatives to the pending natural legislation could also be brought forth. Although each platform has the ability to offer suggestions, the social platform is most likely the one to offer up alternatives when it comes to pending natural legislation coming from the representative legislature.

The purpose of such an endeavour of creating competing legislation while still in the process of refining and defining a pending piece of natural legislation is twofold. One, so that the process itself can naturally create various other avenues of thought, and two, so fact and evidence that could be captured in an alternative political conception to achieve the same goal in a different and possibly more efficient manner are openly debated and discussed.

Continuing with our thought experiment, it is now possible to envision some of the possible alternative forms of postmodern natural law and amendments that the postmodern digital estate allows, which a modern state is incapable of enacting.

For example, within the social digital forum it would be possible to argue and bring forth with scientific evidence, facts and research a new proposal based upon the original framing of the natural legislation. That is, instead of raising the minimum wage as the original natural legislation proposed, a progressive framework of pricing could be placed on all basic goods based upon personal income level.

Due to the interconnectedness of the digital estate with society itself, a number of unique avenues are open to primary democracy and the running of the state. These unique attributes eventually find their way into any natural law and legislation politically conceived or executed. For example, the digital estate allows for the explicit targeting of any existing laws, regulations and market forces found within the financial system, which, by their very execution, create within them postmodern social obligations.

In the modern context, these social obligations would fall under definitions of civic

responsibility expressed in the form of concepts like social justice or the idea of economic rights. Moreover, in the modern context they can only be seen in terms that apply to overall applications, which address market forces and sectors in general. However, with the individual as the defining line in the postmodern condition, and the ability of the digital estate to refine to a minute and microscopic level, the possibility exists that postmodern natural law and legislation could function on an individual level of input as to form and direction. Thus, the reasoning and ability behind the new political conception that targets specific pricing within the economy itself.

This new political conception, with the stated goal of addressing the issue of poverty and economic disenfranchisement within society, once discussed and debated within the social platform, would then be formally introduced to the other platforms of the digital political forum for discussion, debate and amendments. It must be stated here that for purposes of convenience and discussion this new political conception would be attached to the original natural legislation forwarded from the postmodern legislature, and together they would continue to work their way through the various platforms found within the digital political forum.

Naturally, there would have to be appropriate recourse for business and industry in such an environment. That is why when the political conception works its way through the economic platform, the required amendments can be made. Provisions for limited subsidies to specific businesses that are overtly affected by such price targeting could be attached, while any inflationary pressures due to such legislation could be tackled by other amendments targeting specific market forces in other financial sectors.

Meanwhile, in the legal platform the discussion and debate would concentrate on any laws, both foreign and domestic, that would require alteration in order to create the proper legal framework for both the political conception and the pending natural legislation to comply with the general laws of the land, be they within the constitution of the state, or any doctrine of human and civil rights that the state adheres to. Additionally, with the structure and nature of primary democracy as it is, the legal platform would also have the authority to alter any foreign treaty or document, should that be necessary.

To finish our thought experiment, eventually both the proposed natural legislation and the political conception attached to it would end up at the democratic digital assembly to be voted upon by the citizens of the state. Within the democratic process of voting by direct majority vote, the assembly works its way through every amendment within both the proposed natural law and legislation. The amendments that pass eventually make their way into the final construction of the natural law brought before the assembly for a final direct vote by majority rule.

Although there is tremendous detail left out from such a simple thought experiment, it gives the reader a basic idea of how primary democracy works, offering insight into the political possibilities and legislative answers that could be brought to bear on tough economic or political problems.

***Postmodern Natural Law & Legislation,
and the Parameters of Private/Public Autonomy***

Depending upon one's perspective, the structure that primary democracy adheres to could be interpreted as favouring only the extreme of two political positions. On one hand, primary democracy embraces the modern political idea of the tyranny of the majority,⁴⁴⁹ on the other, one could argue that primary democracy embraces a new and more radical idea that creates a free-for-all of individual wants and desires—in either case leaving a postmodern society ungovernable.

In all actuality, it is from the tyranny of group politics, expressed in collective terms using words like *elite*, *socially connected*, or *networked* that primary democracy attempts to limit in terms of both their power and influence—be they found in the top hierarchical position of society through the possession of wealth and property, a well organized and financed group within civil society, or an entrenched cabal of bureaucrats and appointed judges within the power branches of modern representational government. Primary democracy is meant to protect society from them all.

To understand the specifics of how primary democracy empowers the individual while still protecting other citizens within society from having their own freedoms, liberties and human rights trampled upon, it is first important to educate oneself in the current modern debate surrounding private/public autonomy and the many misunderstandings these concepts have fostered over the years, despite centuries of thought and discussion in the realm of political philosophy.

Many academics and intellectuals have thus far not succeeded in satisfactorily reconciling the paradox of private and public autonomy at a fundamental political conceptual level, evident from the unclear relationship between individual rights and public law in the field of jurisprudence, as well as from the unresolved competition between human rights and popular sovereignty in social-contract theory.⁴⁵⁰

Furthermore, the problem of this paradox between private and public autonomy goes beyond the structural impediments that modern representational democracy forces upon any solution. As Jurgen Habermas points out, the difficulties stem not only from certain premises rooted in the philosophy of consciousness but also from a metaphysical legacy inherited from natural law—namely, the subordination of positive law to natural law or moral law.⁴⁵¹

With this basic outline concerning the modern problem sufficiently stated, there are three questions that need addressing. The answers to these fundamental questions are specifically tasked with putting forth a postmodern perspective in the hope of illuminating a possible solution to the problem of having two specific, overlapping spheres of influence and interest in society.

⁴⁴⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyranny_of_the_majority

⁴⁵⁰ Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1996. p. 84.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 84.

First, one must ask, “Why is Jurgen Habermas’s interpretation of the private/public autonomy paradox important to this discussion of primary democracy?” Second, “How do the issues of private and public autonomy relate to the construction of the democratic digital assembly and its sister institution of the digital political forum, based upon Habermas’s theory of constructive action?” And, finally, “Where does individual self-determination begin and where does it end when determining public need to enforce collective norms for the purposes of security, peaceful cooperation and civic harmony?”

Before answering the first question, it is best to outline the current modern interpretation of the two specific schools of political thought that describe the divide between private and public autonomy. On one side of the debate is the modern liberal interpretation, and on the other end of the political spectrum is civic republicanism.

It would be prudent to focus on the views of Jurgen Habermas concerning this modern political dilemma. The purpose of this is twofold: to show not only two of the more traditional foundational definitions at play, definitions accepted by modern thinking, but also to lay the groundwork for the postmodern structure of primary democracy and its link to Jurgen Habermas’s theory of collective action.

Specifically, by outlining Jurgen Habermas’s view on this paradox, one can see the solution offered by primary democracy more clearly. Primary democracy shows itself as a political structure built specifically with the intention of merging the issue of private and public autonomy, creating not only a postmodern legal structure that favours neither entity through its very use of postmodern natural law and legislation, and offering the individual a dual political opportunity of both participating in the political debate and the democratic approval of societies postmodern natural laws, reshaping the modern division between private and public political spheres into a single entity of influence in postmodern society.

As John Rawls explains in his reply to Jurgen Habermas, the liberal writers typically regard the relationship between the two forms of autonomy in such a way that private autonomy, as specified by the liberties of the moderns, is founded upon human rights (for example, the rights of life, liberty, and [personal] property), and on an “anonymous” rule of law. On the other hand, the public (political) autonomy of citizens is derived from the principle of popular sovereignty and expressed in democratic law.⁴⁵²

As for civic republicanism, John Rawls offers up the following interpretation based upon the musings of Jurgen Habermas. Rawls sees civic republicanism in the tradition of Aristotle: that it has, all along, granted priority to ancient over modern liberties.⁴⁵³ Contrary to Locke and Kant, Habermas denies that the rights of the moderns are moral rights based either on natural law or a moral conception, such as the categorical imperative.⁴⁵⁴ By basing those rights on morality, liberalism subjects the legal order to an

⁴⁵² Rawls, John. “Political Liberalism: Reply to Habermas.” *The Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 92. No.3. 1995. p. 161.

⁴⁵³ Ibid. p. 162.

⁴⁵⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categorical_imperative

external ground, thereby placing constraints on legitimate democratic law; whereas the view of Rousseau and civic republicanism bases ancient liberties on the ethical values of a specific community, with its ethos of the common good, and rooting those liberties on particular parochial values.⁴⁵⁵

Understanding of the paradox of the modern problem of autonomy as seen by Jurgen Habermas brings us to our second question. By moving between these two errors, Habermas sees the liberties of public autonomy and private autonomy as “co-original” and of “equal weight.”⁴⁵⁶ It is within the digital political forum and the democratic digital assembly that this unresolved competition between the two forms of autonomy is resolved, and the connection between Jurgen Habermas’s theory of collective action and primary democracy is forged.

While the political conception that is the precursor to postmodern natural law is debated and formed through a process of collective (public) participation in the digital political forum, the individual (private) need of autonomy is realized, founded as it is upon the expression of ideal public reason, when the postmodern natural law is brought before the democratic digital assembly for ratification—a democratic process structured and defined by direct majority vote.

Moreover, this idea of direct majority vote, or self-legislation by citizens, should not be reduced to the *moral* self-legislation of *individual* persons⁴⁵⁷ as it relates to Jurgen Habermas’s discourse principle. This discourse principle is intended to assume the shape of a principle of democracy only by way of legal institutionalization.⁴⁵⁸

This brings us to our third and final question regarding any intrusion upon the individual or private sphere by a public/collective sense of authority. The realm of private or individual autonomy in society is reinforced when the postmodern natural law is brought before the legal system of any postmodern society that is grounded upon the idea of primary democracy.

Adjudicated by an independent and impartial judiciary, this legitimate postmodern natural law is examined for its compliance or its illegality in relation to any existing modern universal human⁴⁵⁹ and civil rights regimes within the state. By allowing such recourse and review, the individual remains protected from any postmodern natural law and legislation that could cause tension between the individual’s right to control their own environment and the public’s need to create the conditions for a safe, secure and harmonious society.

In essence, when looking upon the whole of this postmodern political system from the perspective of Jurgen Habermas—be it externally as a political system founded upon the

⁴⁵⁵ Rawls. p. 162.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1996. p. 121.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights

theory of collective action or from an interior perspective that relies upon a discourse of deliberative democracy—primary democracy allows for the private and public political spheres to present themselves as one. And in the course of amalgamating the private with the public, the democratic people as sovereign legislator, fully autonomous politically, must not enact anything that violates one's human rights.⁴⁶⁰

Impartial, Independent and Elected Modern Law and Postmodern Natural Law Courts

For too long, the Western world has been directed by an elite who are able to manipulate the creation of law to pursue their own selfish political interests and economic needs. The direction in which the state has been moving in the last few years is one that is against the general will of the people.

The fact that the majority of people in many of the Western representative democracies have lost their political will is not the result of politicians falling out of favour, but rather because the system itself has lost its meaning. And from the perspective of future generations, the direction of a postmodern state must always move within the boundaries set by the people of that state.

Much of this loss of meaning can be blamed on the current political system of representational democracy and its many failings. But one can also find a link to this lack of purpose in the modern legal system—which is, ironically, a system designed philosophically to ensure that the laws of the state affect the individuals of the state equally and provide justice and recourse to those so wronged. And like the politician, or the appointed political and economic boards that function in much of the Western world today, the law courts too were formed around an appointed judiciary steeped in patronage and corruption.⁴⁶¹

But with the creation of postmodern natural law and legislation in the hands of the individual of the state, it follows that there needs to be a judicial arm that cannot only enforce but interpret the proper use of this new 4th power within society.

In embracing the idea of primary democracy, it becomes necessary to not only expand the role of the judiciary, but the areas of jurisdiction and purview will need to be expanded as well. As illustrated in the previous essay regarding the impact that postmodern natural law and legislation can have upon society when filtered through the digital estate, it is logical to have an impartial and independent judicial overview of any postmodern natural law or legislation that becomes legitimate law. In essence, it will be necessary to create a new natural law system for any nation, one that is constructed upon primary democracy.

In one sense, the judicial system that is required would best be modeled along the lines of

⁴⁶⁰ Rawls, John. "Political Liberalism: Reply to Habermas." *The Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 92. No.3. 1995. p. 163.

⁴⁶¹ <http://www2.macleans.ca/tag/bastarache-inquiry/>

a human rights court, the likes of which can be found in Europe today.⁴⁶² However, due to the immense scope and breadth that postmodern natural law and legislation encompass, having one court handling all possible claims or applications is simply impractical.

The best example of how these new natural law courts should be structured comes from the parallel system of human rights justice that is opposite the civil and criminal justice system found in Canada. With the creation of the Human Rights Courts (tribunals)⁴⁶³ both federally and provincially, Canada has created a second tier system of justice that runs parallel to the formal judiciary branches of that state, some examples being the provincial Court of Queen's Bench, the various territorial court systems, and the Federal Court of Canada, with all falling under the purview of the Supreme Court of Canada.

This parallel judicial system has been viewed with either an intense amount of skepticism or admiration, depending upon one's personal views of ideology, liberty, and personal expression. For the skeptical, there has been plenty of recent evidence to question the appropriateness of such a court system.

Although created with egalitarian and noble goals of removing discrimination within Canadian society, these Human Rights Commissions have become, over the years, a source of great contention in Canadian society—having, in fact, become abrasive tools of coercion and punishment for use by the state against both political thought and speech.⁴⁶⁴

However, in a society that adheres to the principles and ideals of primary democracy, such human rights tribunals could easily be converted into natural law courts, using a completely revamped structure. From a legal perspective, these new natural law courts would have to adapt to tradition, and historical forms or systems of justice; practices of presenting evidence, discovery, presenting witness and other similar concepts would have to be drawn from modern legal systems like the French Civil Code, the British tradition of Common Law, or the American constitutional tradition. Even the recognized legal system allocated to any Western state that today is described as a functioning democracy could be used as an example of how to build such a natural law system.

And instead of an appointed commissioner like the Canadian Human Rights Commission, one could envision a panel of elected judges who preside over a limited jurisdiction solely confined to the power structure found within the areas that postmodern natural law or any piece of legislation is intended to serve.

One would also have to place these natural law courts outside the existing judicial power structure of the state to ensure impartiality and independence, so that there are no conflicts of interest arising between the remaining modern legal system and any new postmodern natural law or natural legislation. The purpose of this is to ensure compatibility and consistency in the rulings any court would make.

⁴⁶² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Court_of_Human_Rights

⁴⁶³ <http://www.chrt-tcdp.gc.ca/NS/index-eng.asp>

⁴⁶⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_complaints_against_Macleans_magazine

As seen in the example of many modern legal systems, the entire regime of natural law courts would be supplanted and beholden to a Supreme Natural Law Court that would have the final say over all natural law matters within the state. Should conflicts still remain, or there be conflict with the rulings made within the remaining modern legal system, a Constitutional Court of the land that oversees all jurisdictions could sort out any disagreements, especially issues like digital privacy, or individual and public autonomy that would necessarily emerge from the blending of the digital estate with its modern political past.

Within the concept of primary democracy, it is advisable that these two legal systems streamline their construction and structure. For instance, if there are elected judges at all levels of the natural law system, it would be wise to require the older modern system to allow elected judges as well. It would also be wise to limit their duration on the bench. These limits should include not only single terms but a short time frame of three years or less in an attempt to limit bias—political, economic or ideological. The logic and reasoning can be summed up in the need to forestall corruption or injustice in the judicial system as a whole in a postmodern society.

From the lower courts to any federal, supreme or Constitutional court of the land, limited terms without the ability to be re-elected for more than one term to any one particular level of the judicial system would increase not only independence but limit any personal conflicts of interest that might arise.

As for how the judiciary is selected in a democratic process, that can either follow the route found within the democratic digital forum and the digital political forum, or it could come at the same time that the postmodern representative legislature is elected.

If one needs any convincing of the importance of an elected judiciary in the postmodern era, all one need do is look at the current division that rankles the United States Supreme Court.⁴⁶⁵ The ideological divisive split between conservatives and radical progressives is just one of the divisions entrenched in the U.S. system.

Beyond the ideological divisions that pervade the U.S. Supreme Court, these same concerns can be seen throughout the entire system in the United States in general.⁴⁶⁶ These divisions are not only regional in nature but can also be defined in a more fundamental way, with a wide disagreement as to how the law and the constitution should be interpreted.⁴⁶⁷

Furthermore, a system of elected and limited term positions for judges would go a long way to ensuring that the legal system of a state that adheres to a primary democratic structure would be an excellent addendum to maintaining the independence of the

⁴⁶⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_the_United_States

⁴⁶⁶ http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/27/science/earth/epa-emissions-rules-backed-by-court.html?_r=1&hp

⁴⁶⁷ http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-3460_162-57464549/roberts-switched-views-to-uphold-health-care-law/

judiciary, a necessary requirement when adjudicating areas of postmodern natural law and the appropriateness of any legislation passed by the democratic digital assembly.

In a world full of information and choice, the fact that our lives are controlled by a few with legislative power and judicial privilege of interpretation is of great discouragement. It is only through primary democracy and the concept of postmodern natural law and legislation—accessible to all in an equal manner—that the individual of the modern representative democratic state will find fulfillment.

For without it, the meandering of the Western world's masses will continue; their disillusionment turning to the rage of the powerless; the representative democratic state eventually succumbing to the politics of hate, forever embroiled in acrimony and mistrust, leaving us all here in the West with a gap between the haves and have-nots in both political and economic terms that will become so great that the latter shall engulf the former.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁸ <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-02-12/papademos-wins-sufficient-support-in-parliament-for-greek-austerity-plans.html>

THE GENERAL WILL AND THE INDIVIDUAL, A RELATIONSHIP REDEFINED

Postmodern Musings: The Social Contract, Freedom, the State and a Concept of Self

The essence of the public general will in the 21st century is best described as that which reflects the meaning found in that part of the individual's mind where each finds that unique definition of self, be it: a workable solution formed from Sigmund Freud's triumvirate structure;⁴⁶⁹ a striking out for the outward yearning of balance through Carl Jung's description of our opposite unconscious archetype of the anima and animus;⁴⁷⁰ an idea of "me" captured today for tomorrow's use in that part of the individual where the soul⁴⁷¹ resides; or a source of power driven by the engine of judgment the philosophical world describes as the concept of free will.

This statement by its very nature acknowledges that the individual is born with a psychological architecture already in place and a similar reality is reflected in the physical world of the individual. One's own unique and purposeful contribution to the general direction of society is not unlike the unique sequence of genes and individual DNA found within us all. Together their existence suggests that the individual is not born unto this world entirely a *tabula rasa*, as many would have us believe.

Through the use of the Internet and the early development of the pre-digital political forum in the platform known as social media, the individual is now free of arbitrary ambiguity and division to choose what he or she is willing to endorse. The collective drive of social or collective rights promoted by social liberalism or social democracy through ideas like multiculturalism, unionism and solidarity is giving way to a new political philosophy: a postmodern Enlightenment that revolves around the perspective and influence of the individual, an individual no longer tethered to the whims of birth or fate, race, culture and gender—words that once were the anchor of modern political debate now only describe and carry no subjugating factor or weight. This is a new political concept of self, grounded in the new digital realm of association and existence: the individual is now not only free to choose how to define himself or herself, but is also free to see themselves reflected in society without any connection to history or culture if they so choose.

Politically there has always been a need to conform to a social construct chosen and defined by others. But, by the means of today's postmodern environment and technology, the outward expression and participation in defining the *General Will*, there is no longer the need to be bound by the same political restrictions and artificial constraints of the past.

Although many philosophers have had great problems understanding Rousseau's concept

⁴⁶⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Id,_ego_and_super-ego

⁴⁷⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anima_and_animus

⁴⁷¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soul>

and his confusing definition of the General Will,⁴⁷² it still holds authority and influence when discussing the direction of any given society or particular state.⁴⁷³

What concerned Rousseau most was the need to address the General Will in such a way so as not to interfere with the development of any individual within the state by injuring another in the pursuit of one's own goals. For him, the General Will is found in the relationship between individuals. It is the duty and the responsibility we owe each other, and it marks the dividing line between the modern interpretation of private and public autonomy—between the rights of the individual and the demands or social responsibilities placed upon that same individual by his neighbours or fellow citizens.

In the modern political era, the General Will was seen to create the purpose for which the people of any community, society, or nation were willing to exert themselves. Expressed through the social contract,⁴⁷⁴ this purpose has been recognized in the West for more than 200 years now, with its definition and meaning partially derived through a democratic process associated with the formation of an elected government. From this simple process, this collective exertion in seeking a pragmatic political direction, it in turn also fostered upon the individual a set of parameters into which one was forced to create one's own definition or meaning in life.

Today, one can see that this modern relationship between the individual and the state has given way to an ever greater meaning: life now exists not only within each individual of a community (encapsulated within the nation state), but in closer proximity to one's neighbours. Founded upon different experiences and evolving in a world of endless personal expression, the General Will is no longer defined simply as a collective outcome of exact political proportion, a single relationship between individuals in a legal contract of two-way mutual obligation, but rather, the General Will of the postmodern era is dynamic and ever-changing in definition and direction.

As society and the Western world have evolved through the modern era—with science expanding to its outer limits of understanding; knowledge⁴⁷⁵ offered to more than an aristocratic elite, its investigation of itself creating new avenues of understanding;⁴⁷⁶ technology taking the advancements of the former and latter to new heights of understanding, thereby creating new paths of political and economic influence—the individual now sits upon the cusp of a never-before-seen postmodern world of political power.

Primary democracy fuses together the collective structure of the modern era with the intellectual and political demands that a postmodern society now places upon that same individual, allowing the General Will to take on an as yet undiscovered set of possibilities, opportunities and definitions of power. And in the process of combining the

⁴⁷² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_will

⁴⁷³ Aspects of Political Theory: Classical Concepts in an Age of Relativism:/Author: W. J. Stankiewicz/p.25

⁴⁷⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_contract

⁴⁷⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge>

⁴⁷⁶ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/>

modern with the postmodern, a new environment is encountered wherein a multi-dimensional interaction of discovery and cooperation between individuals is created, initiating new responsibilities and political freedoms, and allowing for the greatest amount of fulfillment and input into society the individual has ever known.

Issues of Freedom and On Liberty

J.J. Rousseau saw the General Will as synonymous with the rule of law.⁴⁷⁷ But how does this relationship express itself in modern terms? Perhaps the best example is found within the French Constitution of the Revolution in Article Six of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*:⁴⁷⁸ the law is the expression of the of the General Will. “All citizens have the right to contribute personally, or through their representatives, to its formation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in its eyes, are equally admissible to all public dignities, positions and employments, according to their capacities, and without any other distinction than that of their virtues and talents.”⁴⁷⁹

This assertion by the French in 1789 also expressed the process and the means by which power within the state would be distributed; it physically described the division between the individual and the state, expressed the physical foundation of the state, and also defined the limits to which the General Will would be confined or applied. It also, in essence, described how the power that is the General Will would be distributed and used in a modern society.

Throughout the modern era, it was this basic concept of the rule of law through which the General Will and the power of the state was legitimized, giving meaning and definition to the direction of the state and, in turn, the individual. It also created the debate over how much influence the individual should have over the direction of the state, but also the amount of influence the state should be allowed to wield against the individual. The boundaries of this legitimizing process are defined as the modern concept of liberty.⁴⁸⁰

It was from this starting point that philosophers and thinkers of the modern era began their quest to understand the limits of liberty in a representational democracy. No philosopher in the past has had as great an impact in defining these limits than John Stuart Mill.⁴⁸¹ His work more than any other set the foundation and has carried the individual forward through modernity in an attempt to provide the greatest possible opportunity to express oneself, creating a modern atmosphere of self-determination, and offering the individual legal protection and recourse from the tyranny of the state or the majority.

⁴⁷⁷ Cranston, Maurice. “Introduction.” *The Social Contract*. Penguin Classics. 1968. pp. 9-42.

⁴⁷⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_the_Rights_of_Man_and_of_the_Citizen

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty>

⁴⁸¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stuart_Mill

But today, we have butted up against the future, modernity has faded from the scene, and a postmodern world is where the individual exists. Liberty has become a worn-out term that has lost not only its power but also much of its meaning. Today, it is the postmodern term *freedom* and the openness that it offers that has captured the hearts and minds of men and women everywhere in the West.

With the existence of the digital estate, a new form of relationship between individuals has evolved. Often misrepresented in the lexicon of modern mass media as “social media,” this relationship between individuals, or between individuals and the digital estate, is more accurately defined as a postmodern form of digital association. Yet, despite this misrepresentation, the continued expansion of definition or scope of this relationship with the postmodern “digital estate” has not stopped.

Unwittingly, this new digital domain has created new freedoms and individual social obligations through its new distribution of power. This digital relationship is the key to understanding the meaning of the General Will in a postmodern primary democratic state.

That is why it is important to once again revisit the work of John Stuart Mill, particularly his work *On Liberty*. With one eye on the postmodern and the other on modernism, one can understand both the new freedoms of postmodernism and the parameters that now define liberty in a postmodern world. Even though we do not live in the 19th century anymore, the questions raised by John Stuart Mill still carry weight even today. And as, John Stuart Mill states, this question has presented itself under new conditions, and requires a different and more fundamental treatment.⁴⁸²

However, in examining *On Liberty*, the answers put forth by Mill regarding the issue of liberty are no longer relevant when one tries to understand and define the postmodern concept of freedom. We must bring new answers to the questions he raises, for those rightful limitations placed upon the individual in the 21st century are *not* the same as those that were politically acceptable back in his day.

In the 19th century, the modern definition of liberty revolved around two distinct and firmly defined entities: the individual and the government. This ever-evolving relationship, often seen as a battle between opposing forces—an individual’s needs versus those of a collective right to wield power, a confrontation that for many in the West has lasted over 150 years, eventually formed not only the parameters of liberty itself, but also served as the political foundation and defining characteristic of today’s Western state.

Yet, power in the state today emanates not only from the government or the rule of law, but from many other sources that a modern definition of liberty has no command over. For many, primary democracy already exists in structure, but they have no access to its

⁴⁸² Mill, John Stuar. *On Liberty*. Third edition. p. 7.

power and influence. There is no way to create postmodern natural law, and there certainly is no definition to the postmodern concept of freedom.

To help in the construction of this definition of postmodern freedom, it is important to first start with John Stuart Mill's modern question, "What, then, is the rightful limit to the sovereignty of the individual over himself?"⁴⁸³ This question must be rephrased in its postmodern context, best expressed now as "How open and democratic can the state become without endangering its own sovereignty and that of the individual?"

Representational government still creates the rules that regulate our relationships with each other. We recognize these rules or laws as a legacy of the modern era. By enacting legislation and enforcing laws, governments create and decide the fate of the nation and, by extension, that of the individual. By default, then, this statement remains as true in the postmodern context as its modern equivalent: the realm of governmental power still has overall influence in our relationships and manufactures our purpose, regardless if that government comes from the democratic digital assembly or the postmodern representative legislature. Each, in turn, creates or generates the meaning, which produces the General Will.

For example, even though power, funneled through the institutions of primary democracy, can be characterized by the following modern forms: legislatures, councils, assemblies, courts, tribunals, military organizations, intelligence agencies; stock, bond, commodity and derivative markets; marketing and regulatory boards, these *primary originators* form the boundaries by which the modern idea of liberty was and power were defined and confined. There is now, however, in the postmodern world one specific difference: multiple relations of power traverse, characterize and constitute the social body⁴⁸⁴ that do not conform to this modern definition of liberty or political power.

In particular, other sources have influence, direction and power in postmodern society too: *secondary originators*. These secondary originators are: science; knowledge, information and history. The power and influence they exert in society are found in such entities as: the university; media; unions; guilds; professional associations; social media sites; religious organizations, and cooperatives; corporations and non-profit organizations.

A third level of influence and power found in postmodern society include what could be described as *tertiary originators* that exist outside of the state. These include: international institutions like the United Nations, the WTO, and the World Court of Justice. They exert influence and power through such things as international law or binding international treaties.

Anything that arbitrarily intrudes upon or creates artificial boundaries between the individual and any of the three originators of power and their mechanism of power, from a modern context, falls under the first question regarding the issue of liberty that John

⁴⁸³ Ibid. p. 134.

⁴⁸⁴ Foucault, Michel. *Society Must be Defended*. St. Martin Press. 1997. p. 24.

Stuart Mill expounded upon. Now, in our new postmodern interpretation of that question, regardless of where the power originates, it addresses and forms the foundation and definition of the idea of freedom.

Furthermore, the process of creating postmodern natural law and legislation within primary democracy begins to address the question, not from a modern, linear and single-minded source of interpretation or impact, but from a more postmodern structure, taking into account all three originators of influence and power in the state, and thus creating the foundation for our new postmodern question based upon Mill's.

By opening up the legislative process, and delegating postmodern natural law and legislation to the individual of the postmodern state as primary democracy does, new dynamics of power and influence are unleashed, creating with them a new set of freedoms and social obligations similar to those aligned with the concept of liberty, but much more broadly based and open to even greater interpretation.

In essence, *freedom* demands a new Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, a new contract or structure that allows for the continued expanding and ever-changing dynamic of the General Will in a postmodern era, unchained from the modern foundation confined solely to the rule of law and now carefully detailed in a postmodern world. The dimensions of freedom found in the creation of postmodern natural law and legislation accesses *all primary originators* of power within the postmodern state.

Such a reorganization of society—one that blurs the lines between the private sector and the public sector, the individual and the state itself—brings us to the next question posed in *On Liberty*: “Where does the authority of society begin?”

In practical 19th century terms, this point was defined “as soon as any part of a person's conduct affects prejudicially the interests of others, society has jurisdiction over it, and the questions whether the general welfare will or will not be promoted by interfering with it, becomes open discussion.”⁴⁸⁵ But in the postmodern world, these boundaries are blurred. It is no longer a simple matter of the actions of an individual, but that of the apparatus used by the originators of power, be they from the first, second or third. Any postmodern interpretation of freedom must take account of this reality.

The modern era never anticipated or understood the consequences that scientific and technological progress would place upon the concept of liberty, its impact on the individual or, for that matter, the state and the General Will. The liberty of yesterday has been undermined by the progress of today and, by extension, the development of the individual has become artificial in design. This distortion or interference is often referred to as social tyranny,⁴⁸⁶ and it is not beneficial for either the General Will of the people or for the life of any given individual, whether you lived at the height of modernity or at its twilight.

⁴⁸⁵ Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. Third edition. p. 135.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 13.

With our diverse societies of the 21st century, it is no longer simply a question of personal conduct, but rather of the influence that all mechanisms of power have over the individual. Freedom intervenes into the realm of the power mechanisms found in all three originators of power, not only democratizing groups and the systems that prejudicially affect the interests of others, but increasing the transparency of these groups and organizations, and opening up the entire network of systems themselves to argumentation, discussion and consensus of direction. This is a situation that Michel Foucault would describe as an interplay between public right of sovereignty and polymorphous mechanics of discipline.⁴⁸⁷

Which bring us to the final question asked within *On Liberty*: “How much of human life should be assigned to individuality, and how much to society?”⁴⁸⁸ Mill thought that each would receive its proper share, if each had that which more particularly concerns it. To individuality should belong the part of life in which the individual is chiefly interested; to society, the part which chiefly interested society.⁴⁸⁹

In the modern era, such a division was essentially easy to see. But where to draw such lines in today’s postmodern world? So much of postmodern society intersects the life of the individual that it is nearly impossible to say where the human rights of the individual end and the demands of society begin. The two are like conjoined twins, inseparable without causing the death of the other.

Therefore, the path that must be traversed is not so much one of defining division, but of assigning a set of freedoms and social obligations within the confines of postmodern natural law and legislation, such that both have an equal share, secure in the concept of reciprocity and respecting the interests of each such that as each affects the other, a mutually beneficial outcome is generated.

Again, John Stuart Mill offers guidance on the point at which to begin. How (it may be asked) can any part of the conduct of a member of society be a matter of indifference to the other members? No person is an entirely isolated being; it is impossible for a person to do anything seriously or permanently hurtful to himself without mischief reaching at least to his near connections, and often far beyond them.⁴⁹⁰

This axiom also applies to the mechanisms of power of postmodern society that directly affect the General Will and the individual. At some point the threshold is crossed whereby a negative impact upon others is felt by all. But where does this point exist in postmodern society? Freedom does not look to expand the already guaranteed rights of liberty expressed through such definitions as association, expression, religious conscience and other similar human rights⁴⁹¹ that have been carefully defined and enshrined in the laws of liberty by various Western states.

⁴⁸⁷ Foucault, Michel. *Society Must be Defended*. St. Martin Press. 1997. p. 38.

⁴⁸⁸ Mill. p. 134.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. Third Edition. p. 143.

⁴⁹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights

Freedom wishes to simply build upon liberty as a foundation. From a holistic perspective, freedom has more to do with defining the boundaries of influence that the General Will exerts within all three originators of power than specifically defining a new human right to protect the individual within the definition of liberty. Freedom, in its postmodern connotation, looks to define the specific dynamics the individual is allowed to exercise over the mechanism of power, defining the level of individual input and the process by which one is allowed to participate in this area of society that has been off limits to the common man and woman in the modern era.

Specifically, freedom addresses the influence and power found within the *secondary originators* of the state, which affect the individual and the General Will of today's postmodern society by enabling the individual of society to fully act upon and use the already existing modern human rights recognized as fundamental pillars of a free and democratic society in an ever greater capacity within the state structure.

Freedom slices vertically throughout society, removing all artificial modern barriers between all the originators of power and the individual; bureaucracies become part and parcel of the democratic body; economic boards and councils once divergent realign between individual impact and collective outcome; a sphere of influence, often termed the public sector, becomes open to individual input, participation and direction. Turning a once closed system of collective decision-making into an individual consensus process that till now was off limits to the individual, a default setting caused by 19th century representational democracy, the issue of liberty, and the modern paradox of private/public autonomy.

With such an opening up of society to freedom, issues and areas of intellectual thought never before encountered will have to be debated and understood. Where does digital privacy begin? What information can still remain individual, corporate and hidden? What must be made public? Where is the defining line between natural law and legislation that affect the individual and what form of law can only be regarded as regulation? Who has the right to be involved in certain areas of society, and who has the right not to participate in others? Where does state authority in a primary democracy begin? Where does individual control over human life end?

Ironically, all these questions circle back to John Stuart Mill: "How much of human life should be assigned to individuality, and how much to society?" The answer offers the individual a whole new postmodern world of freedom, liberty, experience and democracy.

The Folly of Super-States and Undemocratic World Institutions

As already stated, direction of the General Will can take many forms, yet, no matter the form, in order to be most effective it has to be structured in a way it can flourish. As with the early modern era, in the postmodern timeframe that structure is the nation state. And as with many things in life, before there is direction, there must be structure. The nation

state provides a manageable and effective forum through which both individual meaning and the General Will of the people can be fully expressed. The idea that a super state transcending today's nation state can offer people this idea of structure and direction is an illusion.

Although many may not agree, the origin of the nation state was the greatest political invention the world has ever known. It not only created a platform for the collective will of a people to find expression and definition through culture, language; geography and religious similarities, but it also provided the structure upon which the individual of that same nation could grow, allowing the individual to find direction, albeit within a somewhat controlled environment.

The concept of the nation state has, for nearly 200 years, formed the foundation for individual fulfillment and self-determination. Without the nation state, the individual and the needs of people cannot be expressed or defined. Yet today the nation state is being eroded in favour of something new, which offers little in the way of fulfillment or sovereignty for the individual. Super-state like structures like those found in the European Union, or World Trade Organization continue to grow in importance and authority without proper democratic oversight by those who are affected by their level of decision-making.

Furthermore, these new structures eclipse not only the rights of the individual, but also those of the collective (General Will) of any people that find commonality enough to define themselves as a nation. This new super-nation, world economic paradigm and International legal superstructure all exist without direction from the very states from which they operate, independent of the rules and laws of today, offering limited protection to the populations of sovereign nations. International treaties focusing on carbon,⁴⁹² Investment law and European Union representational democracy⁴⁹³ are all undermining the political and economic sovereignty of nations, disenfranchising and marginalizing people in favour of profit and power, making the individual all but irrelevant.

These overarching levels of government and authority create an environment where concepts of equality and justice are lost, and bureaucracy smothers individual input and choice. Democracy in many Western European states is non-existent, overridden by unelected councils and bureaucracies. These inherent flaws of such authoritarian structures have caused many to come to the conclusion that it is only upon a nation state that world, regional and local government should be structured.⁴⁹⁴ The concept of global government and world authority should be left for the trash bin of history.

Many people in Western democracies see little hope or fulfillment in their lives due to the simple fact that the political platforms of expression which worked so well prior to this century are now obsolete and filled with corruption. What little room there is left to grow

⁴⁹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_Protocol

⁴⁹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Parliament

⁴⁹⁴ Dahl, Robert. *Dilemmas in a Pluralist Democracy*. 1982. p. 16.

and enjoy life—the defining factors of the postmodern General Will—is slowly being eroded away in political and economic consolidation, whereby a few benefit at the expense of the rest, and rules and regulations are imposed from outside the boundaries of the nation state.

Artificial Influence from International Law, Treaties and Commitments

Another area of concern is the subjugation of the General Will by an artificial narrative not only from within the state, but from outside forces defined previously as tertiary originators of power.

It is in this third level power that the concept of honour truly rings hollow within the minds of millions. Necessity and responsibility provide direction for the Western mind, but finding fulfillment in life is more than just doing your duty. The individual must find reason to move forward to the next day. Each step forward must make sense, not only for the collective, but also the individual; meaning must carry with it not only a benefit for society in general, but it must also be reflected in each individual's definition of self. In essence, meaning must be viewed in a holistic manner within a sphere of discussion and decision, making it impenetrable by outside forces or influence.

The problem for centuries was that individual needs have been subsumed by the needs of the collective. From representative democracy to socialism, from kings to tyrants, there has existed at one time or another a form of government that has placed individual meaning after the lust for power. From this modern perspective, those in power wield the levers of the state in the direction that benefits them the most.

Today, those intent on pursuing control and conquest have moved their battlefield to the international stage. This undue influence on the individual of the Western nation state can be pointed to specifically in the implementation and ratification of treaties and laws that profoundly affect the lives of individuals without democratic accountability or recourse.

From treaties that deal with the navigation of the sea⁴⁹⁵ to economic free trade zones that function without input from those most greatly affected by their existence,⁴⁹⁶ the issue of control, authority and individual self-determination have all been undercut by this international push to undermine the sovereignty of the nation state in the Western world.⁴⁹⁷

Empowering the General Will with a Postmodern Concept of Self

The Enlightenment was the project of modernity. It brought forth a world of liberty, innovation, understanding and prosperity that could only have been made possible

⁴⁹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Convention_on_the_Law_of_the_Sea

⁴⁹⁶ http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/legal_e.htm

⁴⁹⁷ <http://treaties.un.org/>

through ideas, concepts and philosophy that were recursive in nature. For many in the Western world, this Enlightenment—driven by this reinforcing interpretation of itself that propelled it forward, allowing only its structure to remain, removing that which was not logical, converting the foolish into the reasoned, centering the chaos of reality into narrative and fractal form,⁴⁹⁸ all the while defining the boundaries for mankind between the physical and the mystical, and limiting the power of the collective by setting the foundation of society in the hands of the individual—was seen by most as the most reasoned path to a future of peace and prosperity for humankind.

But many who live in Canada or those countries that make up the European Union are today hard pressed to see the Enlightenment that propelled the world out of the 17th and 18th centuries. Much of the Western world has marched to a different tune for the last 80 years; a history of conquest fueled by greed has shaped a world that fears the individual rather than celebrates one's possibilities.

More recently, technology, uniquely manipulated by a few, has not only blinded society but the individual to the concept of truth; governments have turned ideology into dogma and they use the Internet as a tool for spying on the citizenry of the state, and all the while the individual is being inexorably marginalized. Chaos and mistrust have once again returned, replacing the master narrative of emancipation of the individual that fueled the imaginations of the common man and woman of the 17th and 18th centuries.

With the loss of the master narrative, how the individual sees or defines himself has reverted back to what it was before the Enlightenment. People feel isolated, trivial, powerless to protect themselves from outside forces. Meritocracy has been replaced with nepotism, each of us dependent on the government or other authority for prosperity and survival, regardless of one's own skills, abilities and innovation.

For a long time now, this context has set the parameters for the existence of the General Will in much of the Western world. Europeans and Canadians seem to prefer the shackles of ideology, consumerism and welfare instead of the ideas and principles of the Enlightenment.

However, there has been always one place in the West from which we thought the Enlightenment would never shrink, turning away all intellectual challengers, dispatching to the dustbin of history those vigorously opposed to its ethos of egalitarianism, conquering evil with a force for good, spreading prosperity throughout society and not placing its power only in the hands of the few: America.

But even now, this same damning attitude against the Enlightenment that once only lapped at the shores of a land founded upon the principle of liberty and defined by modernity has itself begun to succumb to the poisonous attitude of fear and loathing, a politics of compromise forgotten, and a powerful few, the elite, controlling the power that rightfully belongs to the individual. Today in America it is all but impossible to reason freely without a backlash, a situation that permeates all of society, placing all expressions

⁴⁹⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fractal>

of freedom—from religious expression to the right to speak one’s mind without threat of penalty—in jeopardy.

The decision of the Supreme Court to uphold the “Individual Mandate” of the *Affordable Care Act* with a clever ruling by Chief Justice Roberts is problematic, his personal interpretation of the tax law never before having been used in this manner in the United States. He created not just new law but a new meaning of the term “individual mandate.”⁴⁹⁹ This event must be seen not only as an existential grab of power and influence by an elite, but the first real physical breach in the ramparts that have protected the last bastion of the Enlightenment here in the West.

More importantly, America has now joined the rest of the Western world by placing a limit on individual liberty, a limit that for many years now protected those born into the United States from subjugation, a reigning in of the core principle of the Enlightenment—*freedom*—by creating with it an unnatural burden upon the individual at birth. What the United States Supreme Court has instigated is not only a tax, but an artificial burden placed upon those who, until June 28, 2012 existed freely, as the framers of the American Constitution had intended.

It is somewhat ironic that what began as a protest against an unfair tax in December 1733—ushering in the physical consequences of an intellectual and cerebral exercise to explain the difference between a real human right and the false promise of that which holds no meaning, and debunking the myth of divine right⁵⁰⁰ and thus creating a place called America where freedom could be physically lived—should be undone by, of all things, *a tax!*

The individual American, once free, is now at birth forced into action dependent upon the government’s wishes, regulations and demands—all without recourse, all without compensation, all without the consent of the individual. Even more disturbing is the fact that the Individual Mandate invests the power of the state in an elite.

The essence of the old Enlightenment was that the individual controlled his or her destiny as well as the state; power was not invested in kings, queens or some similar elite formed by mere association based upon history or tradition, but rather in the *people*. That power in the people also allowed the individual to remain inactive and free within the state if one so chose.

This concept of individual freedom was at the core of America’s experiment and in turn set the parameters of the General Will found within the United States. With this new court ruling and the intrusion of other events of similar design into the political and legal system of the United States, the structure of the General Will has been slowly moved from a foundation based upon the interests of each individual in society to a structure more reminiscent of European values and principles: that of the collective right and selective rights of power and influence by “those who were born to rule.”

⁴⁹⁹ <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/11pdf/11-393c3a2.pdf>

⁵⁰⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_right_of_kings

To reveal the underlying direction and understand this new horizon the United States has been steered toward, all one need do is evaluate with a critical eye the political and intellectual debate that consumes the elite of America today. For most, the concept of “I” has become “we.” Not a “we,” as in “we Americans” but a “we” defined outside the concepts of individualism, nationality, philosophy, tradition and religion.

It is a “we” founded upon the closed parameters within ideology. A “we” specifically engineered and designed to split the American public and the American people apart—the end result pitting one group against another, one American against another. An ideological argument of a “we” that is grounded upon the false argument that individual rights can only be secured or protected by collective action, forgetting the fact that the common man and woman can secure their individual rights by acting independently of their own volition. This actionable personal empowerment is called *democracy* and it allows for one vote per person, equally weighted in law and existing in exact proportion to the power which is shared by one’s neighbours.

Furthermore, from this “we,” this artificially structured debate, it is possible that only individual limiting proposals can find form and function, thereby consuming much of the main political discourse in America. The reason is simple: any discussion of the opposite of the questions that are generated by ideologues and their strict interpretations of political theories—a reason so purposed as to engineer and control the direction of public interest in the political ether—would be self-defeating.

Moreover, within this artificial political environment it becomes possible to anchor secondary issues of interest. Concerns such as gender quotas, the stoking of embers in a cultural war,⁵⁰¹ the concept of fairness, carbon footprints and optimum debt ratios are the reasons why serious questions—the traditional narratives of past eras like freedom, liberty, egalitarianism, individual spirituality and intellectual Enlightenment—have become abstracts of investigation.

Once talked about by the public in every town square, discussed by philosopher and academic alike regardless of political affiliation or ideology, these issues are now regarded as “little questions” that only children could find interest or enjoyment in answering, existing only in the realm of hypothetical theory, language games,⁵⁰² entertainment and that of storybook fiction.

This engineered ideological debate that has consumed Canada and those countries that make up the European Union for decades has now slowly seeped into the American foundation and its current political zeitgeist. Simply stated, America has reverted to a level of intellectual and public debate that it grew out of a long time ago, one in which the rest of the West and modernity have been stuck for some time.

⁵⁰¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_war

⁵⁰² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language-game>

When those of the older generation here in the West look out their living room windows today, they are confronted by a subconscious polarity of misunderstanding. The political world outside that window is a world both after and before modernity, yet their minds do not see the postmodern, transfixed as they are by the past.

For them, reality can only be interpreted through the prism of modern ideology.

Each child is born into this world anew. But what the child is born into is not. Many of the political institutions of the West have been around for a better part of 200 or more years now. The laws, rules, regulations, and associations that form the foundation of these institutions have been forged throughout the years mostly without interruption. And it is within this timeframe that ideology has slowly become the mortar between these bricks of foundation, between the institutions of society and the individual.

Over the years, this acceptance and immersion in a world of false principles, rights and beliefs have become as rigid as stone. Enforced by ideologues found in all political parties, the elite are once again infused with a sense of entitlement and privilege, creating a false right of accession to power and influence.

From the Baby Boomers and the Greatest Generation in America to those who still call themselves members of the New Left in Europe⁵⁰³ and those in Quebec who were the vanguard of the Quiet Revolution,⁵⁰⁴ all are now caught in this collective trap of ideology, suffering the consequences and outcomes of a past defined by a false narrative, offering to the world today a hollow and limited interpretation of what it means to be an individual, a concept that to them can only exist if it is tied to another. Institutions and ideology carry forward the “we” that so many talk about today.

The founding pillar of their General Will comes from a collective few. For them, the great question that Diderot put forth—“I think, therefore I am” —has, at the end of the 20th century, been turned on its intellectual head, its meaning all but gone and changed to “We think, therefore we are.”⁵⁰⁵ This thought process is evident and expressed today in the newspapers that are the foundation of a free society. An editorial article once written by an intelligent and responsive individual is now a compilation, an amalgamation of thoughts and ideas agreed upon by an editorial board, with all writing for one.

But something very Enlightening has taken root in the first generations born into the 21st century. They once again see the insight and truth of that original statement “I think, therefore I am.” Today, youth see the same illegitimate legacy of representational democracy that their brethren saw hundreds of years ago in the audacious lies upon which the theory of Divine Right was forged.

Today’s youth see that power is in the individual; they see the folly of placing decision-making in the hands of a few elite out of intellectual touch, whose increasing wealth is

⁵⁰³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Left

⁵⁰⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quiet_Revolution

⁵⁰⁵ <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Gorbachev-among-speakers-at-We-Day-----171135191.html>

the driving force behind policy, with privilege guaranteeing that this unrealistic interpretation of power is handed down to heirs of the elite, all the while creating a wedge between those with influence and the promised liberty offered to the otherwise powerless masses of modernity.

When the Millennials⁵⁰⁶ and the Gen-Xers⁵⁰⁷ look through a Microsoft window... our eyes are open to the postmodern world.⁵⁰⁸

Whereas the old Enlightenment was mostly centred on the cerebral in its modern incantation, the new era of Enlightenment of today's postmodern world has taken on physical form. The Internet, and the digital estate, is the postmodern physical manifestation of the place modernity was trying to lead us all. Where there were once only ideas, concepts, rights and responsibilities written down on paper, there is now a physical structure upon which to place freedom in all its forms.

At the beginning of this essay it was stated that the General Will of today is that which reflects the meaning found in each individual; the individual of a postmodern society is not one and the same as society, rather both are unique and equally connected to each other. While questions of liberty defined the boundaries between the people and their government, freedom now asks questions and places demands from the perspective of all entities that make up society.

Primary democracy or, for that matter, any postmodern structure that uses the platform of digital association as its base, unleashes the power of the individual within all originators of power found within the state, empowering the individual and the concept of self to transform the artificial narratives of ideology, economics and politics, or any other collective identity enforced upon the individual from the era of modernity.

As Foucault illustrates, it seems that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations imminent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitutes their own organization as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them. The support which these force relations find in one another thus form a chain or system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions isolate them from one another. Lastly, as the strategies take effect, their general design or institutional crystallization is embedded in the state apparatus, in the formation of the law, in various social hegemonies.⁵⁰⁹ Translation: the digital estate accommodates all while ignoring none.

With the structure that digital association offers, it becomes possible for the individual to better interpret or manipulate the manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and

⁵⁰⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_Y

⁵⁰⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_X

⁵⁰⁸ Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minnesota. 1984. p. 81.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 92.

institutions that run through society as a whole.⁵¹⁰ It is within these multiple relationships that the individual finds himself, that the General Will of digital association is born.

The overall importance of primary democracy or digital association is in giving the anonymous agent of power,⁵¹¹ that being the individual, the ability to finally contribute and shape the various levels of force and originators of power found within today's postmodern society. The originators of power described in this essay are what Michel Foucault would call terminal forms of power.⁵¹²

In essence, by allowing the individual of the Western world the opportunity to create postmodern natural law and legislation, as primary democracy does, purpose and meaning are recreated in the state, thus allowing the General Will and the individual to find free expression. Through this freedom, individuals can find fulfillment and meaning. Without meaning in life, the will to succeed and the drive for achievement is sacrificed to expediency, performance, and the efficiency of the system itself.

Primary democracy offers not only the possibility of returning to a more noble and enlightened path of ideas, but also offers up a new set of values and experiences unique to the postmodern world, bringing with it an enhancement of freedom in all its forms, and a new frontier in individual equality and justice.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid. p. 94.

⁵¹¹ Ibid. p. 95.

⁵¹² Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexualisation*. Vintage Books. 1990. p. 92.

A NEW 21st CENTURY REPUBLICANISM

Governance, Equality and Justice in an Age of Digital Association

In Europe today, the unthinkable has happened...social democracy, with the help of the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties, has blindly walked the people into the foyer of the house that totalitarianism is building. Can the people of Ireland, Greece, Spain and Portugal say they are a free people anymore now that the Euro zone and the European Union have a greater force in law than do the people of these once sovereign nations?⁵¹³ When all are forced to submit to economic and political edicts from Brussels or other European institutions? What of the injustice suffered by those with money in a Cypriot bank account? What rights of property exist for their protection?⁵¹⁴ And lest we all forget the motto of the European Union is: “Once in never out.”

In France, a once-thriving republic has itself now succumbed to this new era of soft tyranny, not only an Orwellian nightmare from Brussels, but from within, a *mille-feuille* of government that stretches from a representative legislature out of control and out of touch with reality to a bloated bureaucracy that snakes its way from Paris throughout the entire country, instructions for an entire country to abide by or face the full force of the law. Trees must be trimmed of branches six feet up their trunks, only government certified technicians can change a light bulb on government property, school children can only eat half a boiled egg at school cafeterias, and now the exact distance that a mailbox can be placed from the wall.⁵¹⁵

Elsewhere in Europe, the old monarchy and aristocracy lives on in luxury and power. In the Netherlands, the monarchy thrives anew with the abdication of Queen Beatrix in favour of her son and his Argentinian investment banker wife;⁵¹⁶ in Spain, Princess Cristina has been implicated in the corruption scandal gripping that country,⁵¹⁷ and in the United Kingdom, the House of Lords of the English parliament is a relic of pre-modern times, a reminder of revolutions lost.

Here at home, Canadians are finally facing up to the reality that the democracy they thought existed in their country was really an elaborate illusion constructed by an elite that never showed their face in public.⁵¹⁸ Legislatures in Canada sit for the least amount of time in their history, and prorogation is the new tool of 21st century democracy. And in Quebec, the Parti Quebecois have introduced a government dictate of xenophobic hate

⁵¹³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/10010352/Angela-Merkel-Europe-has-the-last-word-in-certain-areas.html>

⁵¹⁴ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/mar/25/cyprus-bailout-deal-eu-closes-bank>

⁵¹⁵ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/france-drowning-in-rules-and-regulations-critics-say/2013/04/16/4a18bb32-9dd3-11e2-9a79-eb5280c81c63_story.html?hpid=z4

⁵¹⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22348160>

⁵¹⁷ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/spain/9969186/Spanish-royal-family-plunged-into-crisis-as-Princess-Cristina-is-dragged-into-corruption-case.html>

⁵¹⁸ <http://www.emp.ca/democratizing-the-constitution-reforming-responsible-government.html>

and intolerance that masquerades as a “Charter of Values,”⁵¹⁹ limiting one’s right to exercise religious conscience in public. This, while the Charbonneau Commission dutifully chronicles the backroom deals and bribery that is Quebec politics as usual in the 21st century.⁵²⁰

Even the people of the United States find their freedom under attack, battling the entrenched political elite who are over-reaching and expanding their power over the state, intent on expanding the federal government by an astonishing 17% of GDP with the implementation of the *Affordable Care Act*. Coupled with what Christopher Demuth of the Hudson Institute has described as the federal government’s downfall: “delegation and debt have become coordinate mechanisms of legislature abnegation,”⁵²¹ entire federal departments like the Federal Communications Commission are being fully funded outside of congressional authority, with these executive branch regulatory agencies funded by the taxes and levies imposed by the agencies themselves.⁵²²

Further complicating matters in regard to the possibility of reforming government in our postmodern time is that throughout the Western world the established elite are shielded by an inept and misbegotten fourth estate.⁵²³ Confronted by a narrative blasted over radio, television and one that is slowly overtaking the Internet, the public is subjected to a debate that focuses attention on a false premise or artificial dialogue, one that pits the idea of civil society against the entity of government.⁵²⁴

This argument only reinforces and exposes the structural problems facing the West today through a dispersal of power between the people and an entity that sits somewhere off in the distance, an island in an uncharted sea, a city on a hill across an untraversable horizon. No matter the starting point of this debate about reforming today’s representative democratic state, the discussion cul-de-sacs forever around the rights and responsibilities of groups, organization, corporations and all but remove the individual from the debate and the possible solution to today’s political problems.

And yet, even in this truncated and friendly environment, when push comes to shove, nervous governments overreact with legislation curtailing democratically enshrined rights of protest and expression.⁵²⁵ Given all these events occurring in the Western world today, there can be no doubt that we are in need of another Machiavellian Moment.⁵²⁶

⁵¹⁹ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-values-charter-protest-hits-montreal-streets-1.1840089>

⁵²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charbonneau_Commission

⁵²¹ http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/george-f-will-whats-behind-the-funding-of-the-welfare-state/2013/04/17/8686d412-a6bd-11e2-8302-3c7e0ea97057_story.html?hpid=z2

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Estate

⁵²⁴ Rosenblum, Nancy L. Post, Robert C. *Civil Society and Government*. Princeton University Press. 2002. p. 3.

⁵²⁵ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2012/05/19/pol-john-gomery-quebec-emergency-law.html>

⁵²⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Machiavellian_Moment

Many who have written about reforming Western democracy in recent years continue to confine their recommendations for improving democracy within a limited and narrow vein of interpretation. As exemplified in *Life and Death of Democracy*, with its description of our current form of governance as a monitory democracy,⁵²⁷ a bloated system involving hundreds, perhaps thousands of political organizations found within the definition of civil society—each with their own unique cause funded through donations from sympathetic foundations and individuals explicitly a part of the elite’s apparatus of influence within the state itself—this paradigm of political action forms the agreed-upon base from which all talk about reforming the democratic system must begin.

Furthermore, when specifically looking at government and representative democracy, many critics confine their criticisms and definitions to superficial arguments of size, expense and structural makeup based on the real or actual numerical size of government: the number of workers, the cost of maintaining the system itself, the shrinking of the different departments—in essence, limiting their debate about reform to the bureaucracy itself.

Drill down into these false arguments and narratives or the talking points supplied by the mass media, that is, if you can afford it.

Desperate to maintain their control and influence, pay walls are becoming standard fare on most websites of the mainstream press; the iPad and its corporate parent Apple creating a singular platform for the Internet and mobile communications, limiting free access for everyone—a pay as you go closed platform over which anything that is found the corporation will have the final say. The same could be said of Android and Microsoft. Will three platforms afford the individual the possibility and promise of the digital estate?

Along with their brick and mortar institutions or corporations, within these platforms one can see once again that debate and discussion are becoming a closed loop of influence and control.

When all is taken into consideration and viewed from the proper distance with the appropriate perspective, the overall goal of such a system reveals itself: each organization within civil society and the fourth estate is trying to influence the decision-making process, from the municipal level of government right up to the national assemblies of the state, ready to ensure that their political, legal and economic agendas are reflected in legislation created by today’s modern democratic representative.

This is a prescription for a world of endless conflict and strife for the individual wherein we will each forever be at one another’s throats!

A proper postmodern conversation about reforming the democratic system must begin with the most relevant and pressing part of the debate, an argument that begins and ends by tackling the intrusion of government into society and its effect upon the people: the influence it has over the single mother of two, the plight of the unemployed man in his

⁵²⁷ Keana, John. *Life and Death of Democracy*. 2009. p. 686.

20s, the pauper pensioner who cannot afford that pacemaker, the student who cannot afford university and the businesswomen who cannot make a profit due to globalization. It is from this definition of not only the true physical size of government but the power of the government over the individual that is at the core of the new republicanism that whispers through the suburbs, university campuses, union shops and dinner tables of the Western world today.

And when this new republicanism does arrive in full force, and it will—just as surely as the promise that those building the European Union today will see its demise (for who cannot see the shifting sand beneath their feet, a modern empire built upon the twin pillars of monetarism and unionism will not last)—history has taught us that as we move further into the future, the role and the lasting effects of empires diminish; democracy and technology tilt the hour glass in favour of ever more individual freedoms, be it political, economic or social.

The Egyptians lasted for nearly a millennium, the Romans for a few hundred centuries, the Holy Roman Empire a few hundred less, the English Empire a century or so, and the Soviet Union lasted a mere 44 years.⁵²⁸ Those who can think for themselves beyond the straightjacket that modernism forces upon the parameters of debate can see the writing is already on the wall for the undemocratic European Union. If one is still unsure of the direction of Europe, just ask yourself if the Euro zone and its structure aligns politically with a republic of united sovereign states, or if it is more in line with the political structure found in the Grand Duchy⁵²⁹ of Luxemburg?

But how does one define this new republicanism? Will it mirror the hallowed republicanism found in the debates of yesteryear in American political discourse? Believe it still exists? Ask yourself: Is there really any difference between an elitist democrat or an establishment republican politician in Washington, D.C today? Will it be a dynamic political force that one's grandparents were taught or believed back in 1922's Ireland? Perhaps it will share genealogy with those in France in 1789, or will it skew toward a more classical definition: something our 8th and 9th great grandparents experienced in the 1500s in Europe?⁵³⁰

More importantly, will the roots of this new republicanism overcome the pitfalls and traps of ideology or the paradoxes of modernity? Ideas finally combined with self-evident truths, as was promised by the Enlightenment, pursued and available to all in society. Or will the scope and dimension of today's drive for more freedom only last as long as a 24-hour news cycle; promises of change in further democratizing Western government left nailed to the door of parliament, a congress, or state and city assembly?

Can this new republicanism put an end to the days of running the nation state as a large corporation? Will the people of the postmodern era stay the course and remain satisfied with a single vote toward the election of the next board of directors, who will use the tax

⁵²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Soviet_Union

⁵²⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_duchy

⁵³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_republicanism

base like it is their own personal hedge fund, the people once again asked to acquiesce to the notion that this abuse of power is a service to the people when really it masquerades as a closed system of inherent power to control and manipulate society? And all rewarded with the simple promise of a dividend at 68 in the form of an ever-shrinking pension? Will that truly be enough to squelch the thirst for reform yet again?

In fact, this new republicanism *can* offer new answers to all these questions for all segments of society. Through a postmodern concept like primary democracy, it becomes possible to see the democratizing of the commercial distribution of news gathering and opinion-making. Where once there existed a one-way pipeline of learning, it is now possible to see an open avenue where the free flow of academic information is available to all members of society. More importantly, the possibility of introducing the equality and justice that today still remain rooted in closed systems of power and influence into all areas of human interaction is not only plausible but rational. These are just a few of the specific areas that will occupy the mind of the 21st century republican.

Governance

From the first stirring of rebellion in ancient Greece to Machiavelli's push against the entrenched despotic elite through to the American and French revolutions of the Enlightenment, we are once again confronted by the same daunting questions faced by those in epochs past: how to deal with the fundamental principles of equality, justice, democracy and individual self-determination. There is a lexicon that has been cultivated and defined over two millennia, but one that has been hollowed out by a monitory democracy, a representative democracy, or whatever you want to call it.

Today's mass protests in Europe, the student uprising in Quebec that removed the premier and the Liberal Party from power, the broader push for indigenous sovereignty in Canada as a whole, the revolutions sweeping North Africa and the Middle East are one and the same in their causal link to the meaning of this 21st century republicanism, even if the context is different.

The individual has come to the conclusion that government today does not work and that the structure of society in general tilts toward that which is unjust; it oppresses where it should offer freedom, punishes where it has no right to exercise power, inflicts penalties upon the individual without just cause and recourse for redress, legislates economic servitude where a benefit should be the reward for hard work.

Governance in the 21st century must go beyond the arguments that have been presented in the recent past; definitions of liberty and human rights, discussed in previous essays here within, are just as important today as yesterday, and will no doubt help form the cornerstone of tomorrow's just government. But it will be postmodern natural law and legislation that will set the foundation of a political system that in turn will create conditions of equality whereby all can prosper economically, a democracy where every opinion is not only freely voiced and heard, but carries with it the weight of power and

influence. And within this context, justice will need to be served and freedom in all its forms will be found in the lives of all and enforced, regardless of class, economic station, or physical and intellectual ability.

To understand the interplay between all these political concepts, one must focus on the real problems facing today's western world. From an internal or micro state perspective, real issues of real concern about today's government structure must be brought forth into the debate: system complexity, state structure, bureaucratic influence and the building of sustainable industries, equitable and just systems dealing with financial relationships that affect not only the state but the individual, will need to be addressed.

For example, the immense complexities of today's financial markets, the legal system both within and around the state (interpreting foreign laws, treaties and regulations), the monumental problems encountered in the administration and delivery of services in a health care system, the planning, distribution and creation of a kinetic energy system for the state itself, a safe and secure food production and distribution system,⁵³¹ the need for continued research, development and funding of technology and science, the need to provide every individual with a proper and enlightened education free of ideology—all must be seen as having the potential for disaster. These systems, and others like them, if not properly understood, constructed and governed, will not be able to meet future needs.

From a macro perspective, governance in today's 21st century world must be geared toward the three most pressing and potentially devastating problems facing Western civilization in the 21st century: system complexity, corruption in the public/private sectors, and the soft tyranny associated with representational democracy. Thus politically, from either perspective, this new governing structure must attempt to balance everything from human rights and postmodern freedom to system sustainability while still advocating for justice in any system, network or sector of society, without intruding on those areas that fall within the realm of the personal.

When viewed historically, primary democracy and this new republicanism will reinforce the definition of classical republicanism described by Marcus Fischer in the prologue of Machiavelli's *Liberal Republican Legacy*,⁵³² breaking with Machiavelli's ideas concerning natural law⁵³³ in such a manner as to allow the "digital citizen" a final say in the overall direction of the state through the digital estate and the political platform of primary democracy. But despite this combining of old republicanism with the postmodern, it is still possible to remain beholden to Machiavelli's insights into the proper foundation and construction of the state itself, such that a dynamic governance is in place, able to compensate for any and all probabilities encountered in the life of the state, and, by extension, allowing the people the opportunity to flourish, adapt and grow to whatever the future may hold.

⁵³¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/feb/13/horsemeat-scandal-dutch-connection-romania>

⁵³² Rahe, Paul Anthony. *Machiavelli's Liberal Republican Legacy*. 1997. p. xxxii.

⁵³³ *Ibid.* p. xl.

The Postmodern Digital Agora: Open and Democratic Nodes of Power or Influence

Just as primary democracy combines the pre-political with the postmodern it also attempts to combine the on-line world with the off-line. Primary democracy utilizes the postmodern physical infrastructure of the digital estate to create a new digital agora,⁵³⁴ an on-line structure conceived and designed to straddle both worlds of communication and data collection. Specifically, the virtual agora is maintained and coordinated not only online, but in conjunction with its relevant off-line system, network or sector. The end result of allowing for this simultaneous contact and communication, being - the ability to collect, store and eventually analyze all relevant data found in both the physical and virtual world regardless of where such information or metrics originate.

One of the non-political defining characteristics forged by the new aspects of freedom in an age of digital association involve the sustainable management of all complex systems found within the state—some specific examples being societal (bureaucratic), economic, legal, academic, scientific, or service-oriented systems like energy, healthcare or food production—and manufacturing systems, two examples being chemical and silicon and micro-chip production.

It is the overall intended purpose of primary democracy to eventually organize and manage all complex systems found within the postmodern state, online, and in the digital agora. The end result is that all individuals of the applicable system, network or sector, regardless of working in a virtual or real world environment will have up-to-the-minute access to all relevant free-flowing information in their preferred area of expertise.

The digital agora of the postmodern era must include enough platforms upon which the state can be run effectively and efficiently when dealing with systems, industry and network management; the digital forum is the postmodern institution of choice wherein the sectors and systems of the state work, connect and communicate with one another in a primary democratic society.

Here, within the system or network specific digital forum of the digital agora, it becomes possible to work beyond simple public reason and look deeper into the fabric of society, allowing for the creation of system specific production and forward-looking direction. Through the use of all relevant information and data based on scientific findings, or network specific metrics of management, it becomes possible to achieve equilibrium and balance, not only within each specific entity, but also between the many complex systems found in a postmodern society.

This symmetry, once achieved, and initially forged internally within the systems of the digital agora, can then be applied more effectively with the stated goal of balancing the offline and online worlds. Both levels of symmetry are a necessary prerequisite if any form of regenerative or sustainable growth is to be maintained within any postmodern system, network or sector of society.

⁵³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Agora_of_Athens

Taken together, this should be seen as one of the main priorities when considering the proper functioning of any given system or network. Specifically, postmodern natural law and legislation must be codified in such a manner as to ensure the efficiency and functionality within networks, and to ensure that systems are viewed with an eye toward regenerating themselves, and that frameworks are developed within postmodern legislation such that sustainable environments for all sectors or industries within a postmodern world are the key defining factor in regard to system or network management.

In constructing this postmodern digital agora, we must take into consideration the work of those who foresaw its invention, its possibilities and its hazards. As Niklas Luhmann⁵³⁵ points out, modern society is over-integrated and thereby endangered. In the autopoiesis⁵³⁶ of its functional systems it has more than enough stability: anything goes that is compatible with this autopoiesis. At the same time, however, it can irritate itself more than any previous society.⁵³⁷ It is this irritation between systems, and the power and influence that each exerts upon the other in a negative context, that primary democracy attempts to resolve and streamline.

Furthermore, in Luhmann's explanation and definition of society founded upon communication,⁵³⁸ a duality is found in the functioning of a system. On the one hand, the system can only function by reducing complexity; on the other, it must induce the adaptation of individual aspirations to its own end. Together, this reduction in complexity and the assimilation of the individual is required to maintain the system's power capability.⁵³⁹

Now, some may argue that if all the individuals of the state have oversight and input into laws and legislation governing society itself as a whole, it could be argued that this process would go against the natural order of the system, and that Luhmann's argument to allow such participation in order to create a situation of openness and deliberation is self-defeating. This conclusion is correct: if all messages circulated freely among individuals within society as a whole, the quantity of the information that would have to be taken into account before making the correct choice would delay decisions considerably, thereby lowering performance.⁵⁴⁰

Moreover, as witnessed in any given system found within a state that still adheres to a modern structure, this duality is continually undermined by corruption, nepotism, professional misconduct and political interference, which ultimately corrodes the performance of the systems themselves.

⁵³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niklas_Luhmann

⁵³⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autopoiesis>

⁵³⁷ Lee, Daniel. "The Grand Finale of Niklas Luhmann." *Sociological Theory*. Vol. 18. No. 2. July 2000. Penn State Debuis. p. 328.

⁵³⁸ Ibid. p. 320.

⁵³⁹ Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minnesota. 1984. p. 61.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

These two concerns are overcome by placing the structural underpinning of the systems themselves only in the digital forums found within the digital agora. Postmodern natural law and legislation can only be forged from the information accumulated through those digital platforms associated with their appropriate affiliation, and thus allow only the appropriate regulator or administrator responsible for its functioning the opportunity to focus solely on the operation of a single system, network or sector. This situation by its very nature creates greater freedom to adapt to an ever-changing environment.

This input of information and the eventual democratic decision-making process found in primary democracy is ultimately the quantitative reasoning or power behind each system, network or sector—in essence, setting its direction and stability of function. This interaction or interplay between information from the digital estate (through its use of platforms and forums found within the agora) and the digital political forum is a prime example of one of the requirements or integrated parameters of data collection found in the external construction of the digital political forum. Specifically, this details the bond formed between Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action and the postmodern idea of democracy spoken of earlier in this work.

It should therefore be the objective of the people in a primary democratic state, when considering the sustainability or forward direction of any given system, sector or network, that it not be one specifically geared to profitable performance, but to efficacy and efficiency. With this fundamental understanding of the purpose of governance illuminated in regard to systems, network and sector management within society in general, we are led back to the discussion of the political power found within primary democracy.

And it is here within the issue of governance itself, within the definitions and parameters of the politics of systems and network management, that postmodern natural law and legislation could and should take on their more historical and familiar connotations of equality and justice.

Governing must be viewed in a holistic manner to allow for input from as many people in their fields of expertise and knowledge as possible, providing a final say in the direction of the many systems, sectors and networks found in a postmodern state. Primary democracy and the new platform of digital association removes the modern barriers that today prevent sustainability. Moreover, in political terms, a more integrated and balanced state gives way to a more egalitarian state narrative, addressing the most pressing issues facing the individual today: limited freedom, unjust economic outcomes, and the problems of systemic complexity, corruption and soft tyranny.

Equality and Justice

Human fulfillment, that drive for peace and prosperity found within the principle of equality, and fully expressed as a need for justice in one's life and in those with whom one surrounds oneself, is directly related to how individuals relate and treat each other in

society, and is ultimately cemented and exercisable in the relationship between individuals through the rule of law.

However, because of the structural restraints that are placed on the idea of equality by modernism itself, it is easy to see how a modern interpretation of the rule of law creates artificial barriers between individuals that, in turn, prevent us from seeing and experiencing a true or objective definition of equality in today's postmodern world.⁵⁴¹

Moreover, much of this problem concerning the definition and application of equality in society can be summarized by saying that, although there exists many systems or networks in which a multi-dimensional definition of equality is desirable, we are still confronted with a modern political structure attuned to a single definition of equality that is codified and interpreted to work within a single closed legal system.⁵⁴² And, naturally, with just one interpretation of equality deemed appropriate for all, regardless of the system itself or how it is applied, thereby ignoring the unique characteristics or structural make-up of the systems themselves, we continue to experience the net effect of this singular interpretation of the idea of equality as a minimum set of equitable outcomes within society itself that do not benefit everyone equally or justly within the state.

This same problem of creating an appropriate meaning or definition can also be attributable to the concept of justice. Many over the years have tried to understand the problem of setting forth an appropriate definition for justice itself. The academic question is best put forth as "primarily a possible, but not necessary, quality of a social order regulating the mutual relations of men."⁵⁴³

From the earliest days of our quest for knowledge, many have tried to supply an answer to this question. Plato viewed justice as related to one's happiness, implying that only a just man is happy,⁵⁴⁴ from which he created his doctrine of ideas. Aristotle viewed justice as a system of virtues, of which justice is the "chief of the virtues," the "perfect virtue"⁵⁴⁵ that formed the foundation of his ethics, creating in the process a geometrical mean between two extremes he viewed as vices.

Some have taken a more rational approach in their conception of justice, suggesting that it is to give to each his own,⁵⁴⁶ even explaining the essence of justice as like for like, that is, good for good and evil for evil, incorporating into this definition the principle of retribution. Others offer up the Golden Rule as justice: to do, or not to do, to others as we would, or would not, have them do to us.⁵⁴⁷

From these humble beginnings, the idea of justice shifted even further. Equality at one

⁵⁴¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postmodernism>

⁵⁴² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equality>

⁵⁴³ Kelsen, Hans. What is Justice? Justice Law and the Politics in the Mirror of Science. p. 1.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 2.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 18.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 13.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 16.

point became the central definition of justice, based on the supposition that men are by their very nature equal, and resulting in the postulate that all men shall be treated in an equal way.⁵⁴⁸ Karl Marx found favour with this possible definition of equality as the foundation of justice, expressing it as “For an equal quantity of labour an equal quality of product.”⁵⁴⁹

The 19th century philosopher Kant saw justice as a categorical imperative: “Act only on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law,”⁵⁵⁰ basically saying that justice should mean that one’s acts should be determined by principles binding on all men.

In the early part of the 20th century, some saw an appropriate definition of justice hiding in the realm of philosophical thought known as natural law, *a line of thinking that was most prominent in the Enlightenment*. This doctrine maintains that there exists a perfectly just regulation of human relations, emanating from nature in general or human nature, the nature of man as a being endowed with reason.⁵⁵¹

Today, the most recent attempt to put forth a suitable definition comes from the academic John Rawls, with his interpretation and definition of justice through the idea of fairness,⁵⁵² a philosophical work that carries with it a narrow frame of understanding from the point of a constitutional democracy founded upon liberalism.

But despite this ongoing attempt to define what justice means, many have realized that we have not moved the bar of understanding very far.⁵⁵³ Most interesting is that, since the publication of his original work, *Justice as Fairness*, even John Rawls recognizes this reality. In fact, from his perspective he notes an even more pronounced backward trend from the principles and the ideas he put forth.⁵⁵⁴

Given the fact that so much has been written and expounded upon for so long, we must question why there has been such failure and disjointed discourse. It certainly cannot be for lack of effort. Nor could it be a matter of intellectual dishonesty. Only those really interested in making this a better world, a more humanitarian world, pursue such questions. So why such little progress?

Using the philosophical argument of Occam’s Razor⁵⁵⁵ as our guide, the simplest, most straightforward answer is structure. In essence, the problem in both ancient and modern times is the structure of the state. In political terms, for us here in the West, it is the structure that accommodates the need for delegation, a representative, always standing

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 14.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 15.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 18.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid. p. 20.

⁵⁵² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_as_Fairness

⁵⁵³ Rawls, John. *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. 2001. p. 2.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occam's_razor

between the individual and *something*. A structure created out of this need to delegate authority, whether it be a political representative or a representative of any system or network in society, is an obstacle to a workable and practical implementation of justice that the postmodern world must address if we are to create a more just Western society.

Within primary democracy just such a new structure exists, one predicated upon on a world of digital association. This new structure, coupled with the creation and implementation of postmodern natural law and legislation by the individual, reorganizes and expands the influence of the General Will into areas of society that have hitherto been untouched by the desires or influence of the individual in today's representative democracy—a foundation from which both the collective and the individual derive their purpose in life, offering equality and justice new dimensions and definition by adhering to such law—this new digital platform creates the atmosphere for a new political doctrine of postmodern egalitarianism.

This egalitarianism encompasses a broader definition and a greater meaning of equality and justice not achievable before due to structural impediments, and artificial barriers of political interference. This new egalitarianism—forged within the digital political forum where the individual once again becomes the focus of all intended outcomes, marginalizing the soft tyranny of both the majority within the state and the minority of civil society—in the end offers the most broad application of equality and justice ever envisioned for a Western society.

The Egalitarianism in Digital Association

One of the greatest impediments to an equal and just society has always been how we distribute power within the state. In essence, there is an undeniable conflict between absolute freedom and equality,⁵⁵⁶ with the need to assign power and the role of decision-making in society. Putting postmodern natural law and legislation in the hands of the individual in the democratic digital assembly, the issue of where such a distinction of liberty or freedom exists is shifted from the familiar foundation of people versus government to a platform of authority where boundaries can shift dependent upon the needs, desires and necessities of the state itself, represented symmetrically with those of the individual.

Primary democracy and the digital political forum, forged out of digital association, replace the worn out and ideological word *solidarity*⁵⁵⁷ in the political lexicon of representative democracy with the words *digital egalitarianism*, returning the fundamental concept of equality once again to the foundation of democratic thought. Within the structure of a primary democratic state, solidarity no longer has meaning or recourse of outcome, since the distinction is no longer made between groups. Solidarity, by its very nature, implies a division of power and an entrenchment of group or collective rights that trump the needs and rights of the individual. It is this competition between the

⁵⁵⁶ Kelsen, Hans. What is Justice? Justice Law and the Politics in the Mirror of Science. p. 201.

⁵⁵⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solidarity>

various collective groups and organizations in today's Western society that have brought our civilization to the point of near collapse.

By definition, this digital egalitarianism allows for a decentralized power base that enables a new political doctrine the opportunity to create the necessary conditions and postmodern digital institutions to ensure that all individuals are treated as equals and have the same political, economic, social and civil rights⁵⁵⁸ as their neighbours.

The end result of this new definition of egalitarianism and physical platform of Digital Association is a new form of justice whereby the critical powers of men and women are set free, creating with it what Karl Popper described as an "open society."⁵⁵⁹ With the digital forum's political power and access, combined with new and dynamic definitions of governance, equality and justice, primary democracy redefines the term *egalitarianism* to reflect a 21st century meaning.

The question then becomes whether or not modern concepts of equality and justice should now be considered obsolete. For example, is economic or social equity still desirable? Is there still a societal need to have equal numerical representation within communities as the basis for building society? To what degree is equity necessary to create a just society? As Murray Newton Rothbard points out, "...egalitarians, like everyone else, need rationally to justify their ethical mandates."⁵⁶⁰

Within the postmodern digital agora, and then the digital political forum, these modern ethical mandates can still be argued by everyone, from concepts like distributive justice, social justice, legal justice and John Rawls's political incantation of justice as fairness.⁵⁶¹ Each can be argued and offered as a structure upon which to construct any given political conception as it moves toward the democratic digital assembly to become postmodern natural law.

In the modern intellectual setting, each of these concepts of justice can be seen as similar in design and outcome, in both real and political terms, within a representative democracy. Yet, all are actually diametrically opposite in terms of the processes or policies needed to achieve the concept's definition of justice or egalitarianism. In a postmodern setting, developed in conjunction with the digital estate and the offline world, and applied equally to the virtual and physical world, these doctrines or mandates no longer imply a need to enforce their will upon the individual in such a top down manner, requiring tight social policy or control, narrowing the definition and influence of the General Will of any given people or society and restricting the individual in some fashion.

Primary democracy limits the state or, for that matter, the General Will from

⁵⁵⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egalitarianism>

⁵⁵⁹ Popper, Karl. "Introduction." *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. 1966.

⁵⁶⁰ Rothbard, Murray Newton. *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature, and Other Essays*. Second edition. 2000. p. v.

⁵⁶¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_as_Fairness

implementing centralized strategic planning or utopian schemes in any manner, through its ubiquitous distribution of power throughout the state. It preserves the natural inequality of individual difference and variability⁵⁶² while still allowing for a system or network specific form of justice to be implemented throughout society, either offline or online.

In intellectual terms, this is a situation whereby philosophical absolutism,⁵⁶³ described in this case as the Rule of Law and often found at the highest level of government decision-making in the postmodern legislature, is contrasted with and balanced out by philosophical relativism⁵⁶⁴ at the other end of the political power structure of the postmodern primary democratic state and its digital institutions that now maintains and holds the final say in the debate regarding state direction.

Primary democracy creates a state structure that allows for the greatest possible set of experiences and experiments: venues of action for the individual to accomplish his or her own goals, creating a definition for justice that exists independent and viable within the various systems, sectors and networks that make up the state, and not in the direction of the state, as has so often happened in the past.

As an example of the independence and variable definition of justice found within the digital agora, one can use the doctrine of justice as fairness as a starting point. Even though I agree with the criticisms leveled at John Rawls by Ronald Dworkin⁵⁶⁵ and Thomas Nagel,⁵⁶⁶ summed up in an excellent article by Cuong Q. Nguyen,⁵⁶⁷ regarding the untenable position of the “original position,”⁵⁶⁸ the digital agora does create an opportunity for the *fairness* talked about in *A Theory of Justice* to become practical and even exercisable throughout society, both online and offline. In particular, concepts brought forth, like local justice⁵⁶⁹ and background justice,⁵⁷⁰ become realistically approachable from within the structure provided by a society that embraces digital association.

Or if one does not agree with such a form of social justice and prefers a different driving force to be embedded within the systems and networks of the postmodern state structures, one could argue within the digital agora and the digital political forum for something more politically robust, and perhaps see a revival of the sublime⁵⁷¹ that would consume the minds of men and women alike, or a comprehensive religious document, servicing civic republicanism values⁵⁷² forged upon the classical cardinal virtues, or a

⁵⁶² Rothbard. p. vi.

⁵⁶³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolutism>

⁵⁶⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relativism>

⁵⁶⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Dworkin

⁵⁶⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Nagel

⁵⁶⁷ <http://www.prometheus-journal.com/2008/12/the-inequality-created-by-rawls-justice-as-fairness/>

⁵⁶⁸ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/original-position/>

⁵⁶⁹ Rawls, John. *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. 2001. p. 11.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 54.

⁵⁷¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sublime_\(philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sublime_(philosophy))

⁵⁷² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civic_virtue

comprehensive philosophical doctrine protecting the rights of the individual rather than some loosely defined collective that wished to be the beneficiary of an unfair and arbitrary distribution of wealth and property.

In conclusion, the digital estate itself provides the platform whereby the concept of digital association, in conjunction with the General Will, is the determining factor of how justice functions or is served within the postmodern primary democratic state. Furthermore, by confining the concept of justice as a component of postmodern natural law and legislation, any artificial political intrusion that limits areas of personal experience and experiment found within the postmodern state is limited, allowing not only for a truer equality to exist, but a greater egalitarianism to take root. Moreover, this postmodern structure now limits the need of intervention to produce specific outcomes for political reasons, leading to a process of justice in a primary democratic state not found or achievable in a representative democratic state.

Thus, a realistic and workable postmodern state structure is created for individuals who believe and understand that human progress can only occur if democracy is allowed to evolve; freedom in all its forms is allowed to flourish unhindered; individual rights grounded in law and based upon the supremacy of the individual are protected; the exercise of religious expression or conscience is respected; and a free market economy that works for all is engineered with a just profit or reward for all.

This is a future all human beings deserve.

REINVIGORATING TRUTH, ENDING THE INFLUENCE OF IDEOLOGY

Resurrecting the Democratic Parrhesiastes Found in Ancient Greece

Friedrich Nietzsche, a 19th century philosopher, once said that “God is dead.”⁵⁷³

Those who live today in the 21st century might say a more accurate version of reality is that “truth is dead.”⁵⁷⁴

Now, such a statement needs some clarification.

The focus of this essay is concerned not with the same truth that Pilate’s question, “What is truth?” (John 18:38), raises—the legal situation of the Palestine of that day [implied] that what a man like Jesus claimed as truth did not concern the state at all.⁵⁷⁵ Nor are the physical laws of science in dispute in this essay; the validity of $E=MC^2$, the evidence that the laws of thermodynamics should somehow be flexible, or that nuclear fission is a figment of someone’s imagination, are not the particular truths that have died a death of a thousand cuts.

What *is* of interest here is a truth that confines itself to the realm of human inquiry known as knowledge; a truth engineered from the very moment we as a race of beings became self-aware, that to this very day we face when we wake up in the morning, when we step out our front door and are confronted by our neighbours; a truth that defines the relationship between you and your employer, the tacit rules that set down the parameters of the bond you have with your spouse, your children, your friends; a mechanism or form of discourse on the macro-geopolitical level that allows one nation to speak on behalf of its people with other nations and cultures; a truth that extends throughout the vastness of all *human* creation; a truth that is centred around a definition that places itself at the feet of the individual.

This particular investigation deals not so much with a theory of truth as with the structure needed to reveal this truth; in this discourse it is a *political truth* that is sought out. But this philosophical quest is much more an investigation into the structure of the truth found in today’s politics than a revelation as to what that truth is.

To talk of someone’s theory of truth is to describe that person’s underlying conception of the form or structure that truth claims or knowledge must take. This may be consciously held, or merely implicit in the discourse. In the latter case, it will have to be dug out and articulated.⁵⁷⁶ In this particular endeavour, both the former and latter will be investigated. On the one hand, it will be necessary to sketch out the framework by which truth today is

⁵⁷³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_is_dead

⁵⁷⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth>

⁵⁷⁵ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. “Chapter 2.” *Hermeneutics and Truth*. Brice Wachterhauser, ed. Northwestern University Press. 1994. p. 33.

⁵⁷⁶ Taylor, Charles. “Michel Foucault: An Exchange.” *Political Theory*. Vol. 13. Sage Publications. 1985. p. 377.

obscured, lost in translation and dead in terms of its power and effect. On the other hand, it will be necessary to portray a structure by which the power of truth can be revealed and re-energized, taking its rightful place one again at the centre of philosophical and political debate and investigation.

For those who are reading this essay in hopes that I might provide a new branch to the tree of objectivism or philosophical realism, or provide a specific example of a political truth that will guide us all into a world of utopian bliss, I am afraid you will be somewhat disappointed. Despite the great progress made in understanding the concept of truth in human civilization, it must be admitted freely there is always something missing in any modern, or for that matter, postmodern definition of the concept.

Even though many philosophers have put forth many great works to specifically define such truths,⁵⁷⁷ or that today's researchers in the fields of political and social science have spent countless years profiling and detailing to us through empirical evidence of facts and statistics, truth still remains somewhat aloof, an unknown variable causing havoc. There is no definitive methodology, no grand equation available to all to set us on a path that all can agree upon.

This great unknown interferes not only in our understanding of truth but creates a problem of communication as well: if you tell someone a political truth, it somehow loses much of its meaning. A similar situation is mirrored in the field of physics where the master narrative is still not understood. How many theories have come and gone in the search for a Grand Unified Theory? Just yesterday we were speaking the praise and the truth of string theory, super symmetry⁵⁷⁸—but quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity are forever separate, perhaps not until the physics and laws of galaxies, solar systems and other celestial bodies of the macro-universe can be replicated and fully understood will scientific truth begin to reveal itself.

Yet despite these obstacles of unknown variables, incompleteness of grand theories and elusive master narratives, *an individual political truth does exist*. And, as has been revealed to many in this world, this truth is something we must each stumble upon for ourselves. Therefore, I will leave it up to all of you to have your own aha! moments.

It is the political truth that forms the foundation of the relationship between oneself and others in the 21st century that is dead, due mainly to its obedience to an artificial edifice, an edifice, or, more pointedly, a condition that by design is intended to bend the will of the individual to it, rather than reflect the true image of the individual. A condition void of meaning, inundated and consumed by a hunger for abstract facts and ideas, intended to numb the mind with an emptiness of emotional value or self-worth that is further rooted in and supported by utopian schemes of profit and power that can never be achieved.

⁵⁷⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant

⁵⁷⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Unified_Theory

This political truth, enslaved by this modern condition, known today as ideology, a process of thought solely concerned with the adherence to apodictic systems of ideas⁵⁷⁹ and enforced by blind obedience to only those facts, figures and evidence that reinforce the ideology itself—creating a never-ending feedback loop of information that does not seek out truth, but lives in a world of unending recurrence and regeneration, and is the barrier that today denies political truth its rightful place between individuals.

Ideology is a structure that denies philosophy the right of investigation, and politics the opportunity to offer real and pragmatic solutions or practical debate. It prevents the ancient form of seeking truth, known as *parrhesia*, from taking hold between those who hold truth and those who are seeking it out. As Michel Foucault writes: “Parrhesia is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself).”⁵⁸⁰

Today’s postmodern political truth is hidden, and the ability of individuals to speak freely to one another without obstruction or artificial influence is denied. We in the Western world are awash in ideology that drowns out truth. It is not surprising then, that as ideology has enveloped all aspects of Western civilization, that the search for other truths has also fallen away from other disciplines, ideology infesting everything from government, the economy, the world of academic research and philosophical inquiry.

Therefore, the intent of this essay is to create an intellectual environment where the ancient philosophical process of *parrhesia* can once again incubate, flourish and grow. Found within a postmodern structure, this political truth can not only be searched out but investigated and acted upon without the artificial influence of ideology—in the process, leaving only the space for philosophical truth to take root, growing in a platform from which this truth can spring forth, delivered within an articulated set of parameters—the reader and participant in the end of this process supplies this truth, a result from the search within for a correlation between this view of *parrhesia* and one’s own understanding of politics today.

The Eternal Recurrence⁵⁸¹ of Ideology

Today, we pull the meaning or the significance of our lives, not only from our own personal relationships and experience with others, but from ideology. Our own thoughts are sequestered away in the far recesses of the mind, questions voiced, not from the personal but the collective; beliefs, the anchor for future investigation and understandings, replaced by the importance of what already *is*.

⁵⁷⁹ Anili, Bruno. “Beyond Liberal Discourse: Meta-Ideological Hegemony and Narrative Alternatives.” Dissertation. 2010. p. 17.

⁵⁸⁰ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT1.wordParrhesia.en.html>

⁵⁸¹ [http://www.iep.utm.edu/nietzsch/Eternal Recurrence](http://www.iep.utm.edu/nietzsch/Eternal%20Recurrence)

Today, the individual exists in a pre-defined world of ideology. The most prominent forms being socialism (progressives), liberalism, conservatism and capitalism. These four ideologies form the intellectual base of the modernist—not science or reason as so many profess in their political discourse or commentary—thereby creating a pre-existing contextualization the individual is forced to conform and define oneself within.

Everywhere one travels today in Western society, one is confronted with ideology: from the structure of our ideas, the design of our institutions to our personal interactions in “free and open” public spaces with our fellow citizens. Regardless of what or how one defines ideology, be it David McLellan’s description that “ideology is the most elusive concept in the whole of social science,”⁵⁸² or Terry Eagleton’s belief that ideology “is a text, woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands; it is traced through by divergent histories,”⁵⁸³ ideology sets down parameters of conformity.

Then there are the more pragmatic restrictive definitions of ideology from critics like Frederick Watkins who voice the widespread distrust of ideologies, indicting them to be simplistic political projects grounded in extremism and utopianism, prone to militancy, and not immune from violence. David Ingersoll and Richard Mathews, on the other hand, define ideology less aggressively, and propose a tripartite scheme that includes the assessment of the status quo, a view of a desirable future, and, crucially, a plan of action for implementing the changes envisioned. Similarly, Freedan has noted that ideologies straddle the worlds of political thought and political action, for one their central functions is to connect the two. Terrel Carver then defends a looser understanding of ideology, characterizing it as “an agenda of things to discuss, questions to ask, hypothesis to make.”⁵⁸⁴

To truly understand the permeation of ideology into society, one can look at Clifford Geertz, for instance: he has argued for an understanding of ideology as a system of symbols through which a given culture attributes meaning and order in the world. Paul Ricoeur linked ideology to national identity, rooting it in the creation of certain “foundational myths” and their deployment for fostering a sense of community. Paul Freire emphasized the role of ideology in the social construction of categories like gender, race, ethnicity, or class, and the necessity of education for a critical engagement with it.⁵⁸⁵

The question of whether or not a specific ideology can offer a larger objective truth⁵⁸⁶ is a foregone conclusion. By its very nature, ideology can only offer a compartmentalized system of facts that can either be false or true based simply upon its own system of reference. In essence, it reflects only its own narrow version and interpretation of what can be constituted as a fact, interpreting and accepting only that definition of evidence

⁵⁸² McLellan, David. *Ideology*. Houston: Open University Press. 1995. p. 1.

⁵⁸³ Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology*. Verso. London. 1991. p. 1.

⁵⁸⁴ Anili, Bruno. “Beyond Liberal Discourse: Meta-Ideological Hegemony and Narrative Alternatives.” Dissertation. 2010. p. 12.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 13.

⁵⁸⁶ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_\(philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_(philosophy))

that relates to the ideology, and limiting reason and philosophical investigation to only that which conforms to its specific narrative or system of definition. Ideology excludes any information or observable link to the facts and evidence from a grand or master narrative; the acknowledgement of such would breakdown the internal systemic structure of the ideology itself.

The question that ideology cannot answer in its entirety is whether or not it prevents a greater master narrative from being known. Is the distortion that ideology places upon both society and the individual such that we are unable to discern the truth of what we cannot see? The fact that the grand or master narrative is replete throughout history offers evidence enough to its existence. Thus, it is this ever-pervasive and all-consuming existence of ideology that today crowds out the opportunity for a larger political narrative (truth) to reveal itself to the world, an unknown postmodern master narrative hidden by ideological subterfuge, manipulating and absorbing the meta-narratives of culture, ethnicity, gender, science and religion, polluting the discursive channels of knowledge and philosophy, distorting, bending and eventually indoctrinating the individual narrative into the main ideologies that consume society.

Examples of this hijacking of thought, idea and political energy abound. Micro-loans in India and Bangladesh⁵⁸⁷ rolled into the capitalist banking system, The Tea Party movement⁵⁸⁸ enveloped by the old guard of conservatism in the United States, Occupy Wall Street folded into mainstream liberal thought,⁵⁸⁹ the politics of climate change finding a home in socialism, and the student protests in Quebec during the spring of 2012 embraced by the social-liberalist Parti Quebecois.⁵⁹⁰

This continual regeneration of ideology—the continuous blending and absorbing of facts, statistics into similar outcomes, arbitrary opinion merged into a simple narrative espoused by the masses—mimics the never-ending cycle of death and life Nietzsche characterized with his idea of eternal recurrence.

Nietzsche envisioned this never-ending event as being associated with a cosmological existence—ideology reproducing an endless living of the “same day” as a never-ending system of ideological motifs and political slogans that sound new but are really nothing more than cleverly crafted metaphors founded upon old facts and perspectives. This endless merry-go-round of regeneration from the grassroots and the absorption of this “political energy” by the various entrenched systems of thought and ideology forces the dissipation of this political energy of truth before it can reach maturity or a level of power that can be exercised as a real political truth.

This manipulation in the creation of political truth by ideology is seen not only in the realm of public discourse through the media of any given Western society today, but it also reaches into the world of academia as well. With the help of inherit structural

⁵⁸⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Yunus

⁵⁸⁸ <http://www.cnn.com/2012/08/26/politics/tea-party-gop/index.html>

⁵⁸⁹ <http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/occupy-wall-street-a-frenzy-that-fizzled/>

⁵⁹⁰ <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2012/sep2012/queb-s15.shtml>

barriers and a rigid process of peer review,⁵⁹¹ ideology effectively funnels the process or the search for political truth into a narrow set of parameters by which truth is to be judged or understood, on the one hand creating an artificial structure for the manufacturing of truth, and on the other, setting forth explicit definitions of interpretation that force the individual to accept what truth is and who should be listened to when it comes to its dissemination.

In essence, this creates a distinct split between those who tell and search for truth and the rest of society; a select group with not only the knowledge of political truth but the ability to expand and explain it, and the rest of society, who can only express an “opinion” that is neither *true* nor *false*, and most certainly contains no truth that would be recognized or acknowledged by the established powers or institutions of the state.

Ideological Influence on the Foundation of Modern Political Truth-Telling

Today, even though some believe that all philosophy is entirely political,⁵⁹² that a search for truth has been revitalized within the academic institutions of the West with the writing of such academics as John Rawls, the fact remains that much of Western philosophy, in particular that practised within the Anglo-Saxon countries of the West, is still dominated by what is termed *analytical philosophy*.

In many respects, analytical philosophy has a monopoly over the search for truth; it is what Thomas Kuhn⁵⁹³ would describe as the paradigm⁵⁹⁴ of our times. Interestingly enough, as with the current trend that surrounds ideology, analytical philosophy also is not interested in the search for truth. It is more interested in the logical clarification of thoughts, concentrating on the logical form of philosophical propositions.⁵⁹⁵

To many academics who teach philosophy, this abandonment of the search for the truth in politics is trivial. Many argue the fact even further, that such a journey is not required, nor imperative in the study of politics. The prevailing ethos in Western academic circles prefers a path of inquiry that invests more time and energy in what is already known, while encouraging a similar position of irrelevance in other fields of philosophical study when discussing the overarching acceptance of the idea of moral relativism,⁵⁹⁶ exemplified by an attitude that can be best described as one of moral nihilism,⁵⁹⁷ and exhibited by the behaviour and attitude found in many, who can best be described as part of the Western elite. No doubt this form of thinking has been ingrained upon the psyche and picked up by these individuals at the finest institutions of learning the West has to offer.

⁵⁹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_review

⁵⁹² Kelly, Mark G.E. *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault*. Routledge. 2009. p. 1.

⁵⁹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Kuhn

⁵⁹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Structure_of_Scientific_Revolutions

⁵⁹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analytic_philosophy

⁵⁹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_relativism

⁵⁹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_nihilism

Now, many will argue the point that we must then look for the truth within our politics in political science⁵⁹⁸ or sociology.⁵⁹⁹ Unfortunately, there are no physical laws that allow us to understand what truth is, nor do these subjects guide us without interference to what this truth might be: overall objectivism is forsaken for the need of minimalist forms of accuracy, fact is beholden to the abstract methodology of systems analysis or statistics, and any “evidence” that is found is itself sandwiched between the polarity of perspectivism⁶⁰⁰ and ideology, diluting any truth it may hold.

In Ireland, a good example of this 21st century use of evidence can be found in the creation of new insolvency laws. Scientific methodology and evidence has been formed using empirical data to give law a new form, construction and foundation. In this new 21st century world of evidence, it preponderantly pronounced that a single person will live on 247 Euros a month for food and 28.97 Euros a month for “social-inclusion.”⁶⁰¹

Is it no wonder, then, with the search for truth abandoned by those very institutions that determine our future course as a society—research skewed toward the bare facts and evidence—that future political guidance would be determined by the mathematical elegance of logical positivism.⁶⁰² The question today is no longer “is it true?” but “what use is it?”⁶⁰³ In this atmosphere, a simple plea for reason⁶⁰⁴ is not only ignored, it goes unanswered altogether.

And with our politicians and leaders of today occupied with a meaningless system of facts and ideas, which are neither right nor wrong but empirically verifiable, should it be any surprise that the Western world has fallen off a cliff, consumed by social strife, economic catastrophe, moral ambivalence and political paralysis?

The inherit problem is that today’s academic institutions remain mired in the mud of modernity; all are still beholden to the modern notions of ideology, history and tradition, three factors that contribute to the false premises, white lies and half-truths that form the foundation of today’s Western world. There is no internal or external forum to validate whether or not what creates the direction of the institution can be identified as being truthful.

Questions abound about the validity and usefulness of those who are charged with leading our civilization into the future. Academics toil away and produce research papers aplenty, new discoveries in the realm of political science are explored and documented, and dissertations in the thousands are produced. These leaders of tomorrow are crowned

⁵⁹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_science

⁵⁹⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociology>

⁶⁰⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perspectivism>

⁶⁰¹ <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/consumer/new-insolvency-rules-to-allow-899-monthly-spend-for-debtors-1.1364648>

⁶⁰² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logical_positivism

⁶⁰³ Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minnesota Press. 1984. p. 38.

⁶⁰⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reason>

and offered the scepter of power to show the rest of the population the way without any proof that their character is imbued with the ability and skill to lead, or that the ideas, concepts and political perspective they wish to convey to the rest of us holds any truth. What process exists that allows those who are the intended recipients of these modern ideas, theories, research papers and arguments, to question whether or not they should be adopted as the direction that is best for society?

Does the system itself decide? Of course not! There are people involved. *People* are the system—an educated elite entrusted with the power and direction of the state, their ideas encoded with power by the politicians, and bureaucrats, then paraded before society by the media, as the truth-tellers of our time. But would Socrates recognize them as such? More importantly, do they *really* speak a political truth?

The problem with answering this question is in itself structural in today's modern society, with the fragmentation of information and facts creating a situation whereby it becomes impossible for all individual members of society to have access to all the facts upon which the functioning of society rests.⁶⁰⁵ This lack of information, this obsolete modern structure that impedes the investigation of the political truth of our society, skews people towards being ideologues rather than tellers of truth.

Today, the ideologue has taken on the pejorative form of parrhesia of ancient Greece,⁶⁰⁶ faithfully fulfilling the right to voice their opinion in the democratic assembly as seen in ancient Greece. Today they offer the worst that can be afforded to society: a simple and rigid message of ideology, mouthed to the masses. Even the analytical philosopher serves simply as an instrument to a higher power of group function: *truth based upon collective agreement*.

Furthermore, the ideologue of today reprises the role that the sophist once occupied in ancient Greece. The sophist can offer a fact-and-evidence-based diatribe about the truth he or she wishes to convey, but the speaker is not necessarily truthful oneself—like the sophist of old speaking a fine and beautiful discourse on courage, but who is not courageous himself.⁶⁰⁷ This artificial political discourse of today reinforces the walls between those who are accepted and viewed by the institutions of today as the purveyors of truth, and the rest who are saddled with simply an “opinion.” If the speaker cannot be trusted to tell the truth, how can one trust what he or she says is true?

What is required is not a further foray into the deep woods of engineered truth and outcast opinion, a hallmark of modern society. No. Postmodern political philosophy must reassert itself and reclaim the territory where truth still matters, and reason trumps faith, a prerequisite to forming a sound political foundation for the future of any society or civilization.

⁶⁰⁵ Hayek, F.A. *Law, Legislation and Liberty Vol. 1 Rules and Order*. p. 14.

⁶⁰⁶ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT1.wordParrhesia.en.html>

⁶⁰⁷ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT4.practiceParrhesia.en.html>

The Middle Ground: a Postmodern Philosophical Constructive Generic Framework

Every search for the truth begins with a question.

This statement was no less true for the premise behind the creation of *The Thoughts of a Peasant Philosopher, Volume I, Politics*.

This search for truth was first undertaken not as a philosophical investigation of politics in 1997, but rather was built around a single question: “Why do I not have power and control over my own life?” I first posited in 1987. I was living in my parents’ basement, broke, unemployed, not yet “educated,” having completed only half of what was required to receive a high school diploma.

As time compressed the decade between the asking of that question and the year 1997, a couple of factors that had brought about that question changed: I graduated high school, I was employed. But despite these two variables changing from a negative to a positive, the question remained unanswered. And simply providing an answer to the question would not satisfy this particular question; supplying the question with an unqualified “answer” would not or could not be considered philosophy by today’s rigid definitions of professionalism and expertise; it could only be considered an opinion.

Furthermore, just as those philosophers of the past centred their investigation upon the need to learn the truth, this endeavour to properly provide an answer would also revolve around the need to speak and search for the truth.

Since both avenues of traditional or accepted forms of modern truth-seeking were unavailable—political philosophy unacceptable in its requirement that an analytical approach be adhered to, and a degree in political science was needed for one’s solution or possible “truth” to be acceptable or viewed as legitimate—an alternate route of investigation would have to be sought out, one with a new structure.

It would be within the ancient Greek form of *parrhesia* that this structure would find a beginning; by writing as plainly and truthfully as possible, the foundation of the argument would find maturation. Looking forward, it was also possible to see a structure that could fulfill the need of acceptability, both in terms of professionalism and expertise.

Since the only variable that had not changed in relation to the original question—my social position in society—the answer, I assumed, would be found within the realm of politics. Political discourse of the day consisted of the generally agreed upon idea of a political Left and Right—a duality, a juxtaposition, a dichotomy between which all political concepts were placed.

However, since neither the ideas of the political Left or Right offered a clear, outright or satisfactory solution to the question posited, it was hypothesized, then, that somewhere between these two polarities is where the truth of this investigation existed: a middle ground of sorts.

At the time, it was assumed that it would simply be a matter of selectively taking certain facts, concepts and ideas from the political Left and then the Right, reconstituting them into something that would satisfactorily resemble a compromise—a bridge between two alternate realities, an organic whole forged from a duality of perspectives, that would, in the end, provide an answer to my question.

But, as the first edition of *Politics* shows, at best the work supplied only an open-ended conclusion to the efforts of understanding the powerlessness of the individual; at worst, it created only a half-answer, a half-truth, that, by definition, was just another ideology. Also, since no real evidence was provided in support of the positions taken within the first edition of *Politics*, it could only really be described as an opinion and not a perceived truth.

Although the work adheres to the premise and principles of truth-telling (parrhesia), simply stating a perceived truth does not prove or make it so. Such an investigation clearly remains in the realm of opinion. Therefore, it would be necessary to create a philosophical investigative structure from which the truth of this question could reveal itself.

Therefore, in this Anniversary Edition of *Politics*, this structure of *the middle ground*, originally presented as a compromise, has now been expanded to include factual and anecdotal evidence to broaden the scope of this investigation in the search for a specific answer to the political question: “Will the individual always have to struggle to free himself from persecution, oppression and tyranny?” —a question once looked upon from the perspective of simply the personal and now grounded in the master narrative of individual emancipation.

Furthermore, the Cartesian problem⁶⁰⁸ of validating this answer as being true has been addressed through the use of a digital archive of information, allowing for a greater understanding of the answer detailed in regard to the question, and allowing the original structure of *the middle ground* to expand through dimension and definition into a postmodern philosophical constructive generic framework.

Taken all together, there is now a broad enough investigation to warrant a serious attempt at the ancient Greek process of parrhesia, a freedom wherein a speaker chose frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, evidence instead of opinion and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.⁶⁰⁹ The need now is to participate in some form of discussion whereby the validity of the one who is speaking this political truth can be attested to and verified by others.

⁶⁰⁸ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT1.wordParrhesia.en.html>

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

The Political Parrhesia⁶¹⁰ Found in Digital Association

Truth or the telling of truth (parrhesia) played a very important role in ancient Greece. It was so important that nearly all the great philosophers and thinkers of antiquity produced work discussing the intricacies and relationship that truth and those who spoke the truth held in relation to those who held power or authority in Greek society.

Parrhesia was first introduced into Greek literature in the plays of Euripides.⁶¹¹ From there it could be found in the work of Plato, the sophists, Stoic philosophy and even the writing and teachings of the Cynics.⁶¹² In this timeframe, political parrhesia pursued the question: *who has the right, the duty, and the courage to speak the truth.*⁶¹³

Today, the postmodern world is confronted with a similar question; a question today that unfortunately is a lot more complex and has less to do with courage as it does with issues of fact and evidence. And, in our times as in ancient Greece, we are confronted with the problem of who is best suited in the telling of truth. Can they be trusted to bring forth the truth without bias or personal aggrandizement? Is what one speaks really an objective truth, or does it only reside in the realm of the subjective?

The ancient Greek philosophers and thinkers believed they solved this problem of defining those who spoke the truth (parrhesiates)⁶¹⁴ by creating a dialogue that offered an elaborate discourse that played off different perspectives of power against each other: the servant speaking to the master, a peasant speaking to a god, or a general talking with a philosopher. It was through this dialogue and the relationship between those speaking the truth and those with power that was not only the determining factor of the definition of the character of the one speaking, but the validity of the truth they spoke as well.

In the modern institutions of our world, we are confronted not only by issues of personal character but the intrusion of ideology, paradigms and the influence of mass media communications in the dissemination of the political truth of our times. Expressed simply: Who has integrity and what really is the truth?

Postmodern political parrhesia solves this problem and involves two steps. The first step is creating a *personal middle ground*, a philosophical parrhesia⁶¹⁵ that is used to counter the influence of ideology and the paradigm of analytical philosophy, creating a Socratic philosophical game. This form of parrhesia is opposed to self-ignorance and the false teachings of the sophists.⁶¹⁶ The second phase involves the process of allowing this subjective truth to be tested and validated.

⁶¹⁰ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT4.practiceParrhesia.en.html>

⁶¹¹ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT2.parrhesiaEuripides.en.html>

⁶¹² <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT4.practiceParrhesia.en.html>

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT1.wordParrhesia.en.html>

⁶¹⁵ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT4.practiceParrhesia.en.html>

⁶¹⁶ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT4.practiceParrhesia.en.html>

Today, we can see the beginnings of where and how this process of understanding and discussing the subjective truth unfolds within digital association: social media sites, Internet chat rooms, digital political forums, and media websites that allow commentary. Even the institutions related to the primary and secondary originators of power within the state are already allowing the subjective discussion of truth: public hearings, referendums, the influence of civil society upon the bureaucracy, all are incorporating *a personal middle ground* into the larger realm of objective political truth.

The existence of the digital estate and the Internet, with its intrinsic individualistic nature, completely reverses the power superstructure that ideology is founded upon, as Marx envisioned: politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics etc., of a people...⁶¹⁷ are no longer collective, they are now each a subjective truth. The (i) that Apple places before its products is not for (i)deology, nor for the continuation of the 20th century focus on (i)dentify politics. The (i) stands for (i)ndividual; the philosophical parrhesiates of postmodern politics demand a democratic and open participatory element of inclusion for everyone from their perspective of truth, and their individual position of power.

Already within this limited experience of digital association here in the second decade of the 21st century, a process or relationship has begun to emerge between the individuals of the postmodern era that diverges drastically from that of modern times, one that involves not only the dissemination of truth but, more importantly, *who* the general public trusts when it comes to telling of this political truth. Facebook likes, the ability to friend someone anywhere in the world, online publishing sites that allow one to have followers are all creating a new lexicon and a forum for dialogue in the process of determining new avenues and systems of discerning the integrity of those who wish to bring forth political truth to the people of society.

To quickly summeraize then, so the reader understands the difference between the old form of truth-telling and today's emerging structure of postmodern political parrhesiates: the old system of politics that still remains the dominant factor in the foundation of today's political philosophy, ideology—with its pretensions to totality, its compensation for a disdain for truth expressed in the cynicism of its criterion of performance,⁶¹⁸ creating sub-narratives like environmentalism or feminism and sub-systems of self-regulating markets, debt and currency exchanges, peddling social half-truths as solutions to *real problems* and presenting incongruous moral and ethical imperatives between non-contrasting ideological concepts—must be seen for what it is: the result of a search for truth in the fading days of modernity.

Even though the postmodern structure of a personal middle ground allows the individual to clarify the truth one speaks of, it still remains only a subjective truth. What is required is the existence of some form of association or forum so that the individual can validate this truth, and complete the ancient Greek process of simply speaking one's mind (parrhesia) to the point of *speaking the truth* and becoming a *parrhesiastes*.

⁶¹⁷ Marx, Karl. *The German Ideology*. R. Tucker Edition by the Marx-Engels Reader. Norton & Company. 1978. p. 154.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid. p. 65.

With digital association only in its infancy, we can just begin to see the platform of communication and debate that will allow individuals to once again interact with one another as was seen in ancient Greece. It has already shown the potential to allow the political truth of our time to become not only known but actionable.

In essence, we may now have the beginnings of a definition for a postmodern political truth, but there is no power behind it to enforce its insights or enlightenment. Once the validity of the postmodern subjective truth is determined, and whether or not the one who speaks of the truth is determined to be truthful, it is necessary then to test this perceived truth in society so that all can debate and decide whether or not this should be the direction the state, society or system should take.

Postmodern Political Truth and the Democratic Parrhesiaste of Digital Association

The final stage in the process of resurrecting political truth in the postmodern era is to take that modern concept and definition of individual opinion and endow it with actionable democratic postmodern power, a power found not only in the democratic digital assembly and the digital political forum, but also in the various platforms or digital forums of the digital agora that feed into these postmodern institutions of primary democracy.

However, in the process of doing so, it is necessary to acknowledge the insight of Foucault that such empowering assumes a prior objectification.⁶¹⁹ Therefore, if the paradoxes and incongruities of modern political philosophy are to be avoided, this creation of postmodern democratic power must also avoid a systemic theory of power.

It is this need to avoid such a system of power in the postmodern era that brings us back to the beginning of this work and the focus placed upon those modern political questions raised in the late 1990s, specifically that of individual emancipation.

As in that time period, much of the modern world revolved around the relationship between political power and the idea of truth, a contradiction that Nietzsche wrote about when he specifically stated that truth depends upon one's perspective. Yet, at the same time, he advocated that there still existed a universal truth explained as a will to power⁶²⁰ and an eternal recurrence of events.

In its late 20th century incantation, this will to power was centred around a cluster of ideologies that continually reinforced their own particular form of political truth through a process of control and manipulation that allowed the ideology itself to become the truth of modern political power, forcing out the master or grand narratives like that of individual emancipation that were, for more than a millennium, the driving force behind the definition of human progress, prosperity and truth.

⁶¹⁹ Kelly, Mark G.E. *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault*. Routledge. 2009. p. 33.

⁶²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Will_to_power

Furthermore, these modern theories of power were self-referencing, creating philosophically hollow concepts of the individual, political power and political truth in the 20th century, each ideology continually fed by intellectual conceptions and held together by a shared relationship through an eternal recurrence. When forced into a postmodern structure, these modern theories and ideologies are shattered by the technological and non-hierarchical foundation of digital association.

Therefore, it is no longer simply a matter of speaking truth to power, *truth becomes the power itself*. With primary democracy and its structure of individual self-determination, with the individual and their own uniqueness serving as the foundation of the digital estate, and the postmodern political power funneled through it, a systematic power structure is avoided.

Now, with the philosophical and intellectual foundation of this new era of Enlightenment firmly in place, one can see the link between the Enlightenment of the 18th century, that being an enterprise for the linking of truth and the history of liberty in a bond of direct relation,⁶²¹ with the new Enlightenment of the postmodern era that holds together a bond between the individual and political power, with both projects connected by a link that still allows each to be defined in its own context. Looked at in another way, each is a philosophical question yet unanswered, but related by the dynamics of eternal recurrence.

Thus, the postmodern answer to the question “What constitutes this new Enlightenment?” is an answer that clearly incorporates not only the historical past and this relationship between truth and liberty, but one that is now forward-looking and identifiable in the new structural relationship found between the natural right to live free and postmodern democracy (D³).

Returning once again to the discussion of political truth in this essay, as a practical matter, this new era of postmodern Enlightenment, or political truth-telling, originates and is forged in the various platforms and digital forums of the postmodern digital agora that make up the structural foundation of the primary democratic state. From here the information that is the foundation of this new Enlightenment is then brought forth to the digital political forum to be discussed as a political conception that needs deliberation, a process of argumentation that leads to an understanding as to which postmodern natural laws and areas of legislation need refinement.

In essence, the parrhesia that was begun and enjoyed by all citizens throughout the digital agora in the platforms of debate now must become the parrhesiazesthai or parrhesiastes⁶²² of the state. As Foucault would say, government is now governmentality,⁶²³ and this is achieved as the parrhesia of the agora becomes a political conception or *political truth* that is brought before the democratic digital assembly of the state, where it is determined if any political action is required.

⁶²¹ http://w7.ens-lyon.fr/amrieu/IMG/pdf/Michel_Foucault__What_is_Enlightenment_1984_-_copie.pdf/p.9

⁶²² <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT1.wordParrhesia.en.html>

⁶²³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governmentality>

Moreover, this political process of truth-telling reinforces John Rawls's ideal of public reason that forms the foundation of the democratic digital assembly. Originating in the extended digital agora that eventually feeds into the digital political forum, this process of seeking out the truth in turn validates not only the process of argumentation found in the digital political forum, but also the nature of the debate itself.

In closing, this democratic parrhesia found and voiced through the various digital forums found in a primary democratic state—where the focal point is the discussion and debate of political truth, where ideas are developed and spread with the intent of creating the appropriate direction of the system and are determined through new or revised postmodern natural laws and legislation, voted and agreed to in accordance with the constitution and rules of the digital assembly of the state—begins and ends with the individual, and thereby creates a political situation that allows political truth to be resurrected and become power, in the end producing a pragmatic solution⁶²⁴ for our postmodern problems.

When looked upon from this distance, engaging with others in the digital forums found throughout society on any number of levels eventually leads to the evolution of an individual from simply speaking parrhesia into someone others will believe to be a parrhesiastes. The end result is a “democratic parrhesia”⁶²⁵ codified by the creation of postmodern natural law and legislation that could be called the real political truth of society.

What this alternative political system requires, in virtual terms, is that each individual in society be allowed the opportunity to present their views, with the possibility of offering themselves up in the role of a parrhesiastes, taking into consideration their own education and knowledge, allowing for the creation of their own personal middle ground or political truth that then affords the individual the opportunity to interact with their fellow citizens throughout a postmodern society.

It is imperative that this political process of individual experience and truth-telling must also encompass a working offline environment that allows for learning within a process of free discovery of knowledge (the freedom and power to believe),⁶²⁶ and allows for speaking the truth (parrhesia) in the same way that ancient Greece embraced such discourse.⁶²⁷ Further, the individual must be offered the opportunity to create an objective base of reference (reason) for the pursuit of discerning truth (the liberty to choose from a legitimate set of facts), and be provided with a methodology that represents and incorporates both knowledge and science within a system of apolitical pluralism (a process of democracy).

⁶²⁴ Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minnesota. 1984. p. 9.

⁶²⁵ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT3.democracy.en.html>

⁶²⁶ Hayek, F.A. *Law, Legislation and Liberty Vol. 1 Rules and Order*. p. 12.

⁶²⁷ <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT1.wordParrhesia.en.html>

When combined together and adhered to, when allowed to run its natural course through the institutions of primary democracy and digital association, this political process will once again allow for the return of the master narrative, whether it be the emancipation of the individual or the search for Ideas⁶²⁸—these master narratives are just two of many.

Should we not follow this new Enlightenment, or attempt not to end the influence of ideology in our postmodern world, our definition of truth, political or that found in the areas of philosophy and knowledge, will continue to suffer greatly.

Not only that, we ourselves will forever succumb to the underlying foundation of eternal recurrence that Nietzsche spoke of, replete with its endless misunderstandings and half-truths. For some, these will be made manifest throughout their daily lives in the following of the false narratives put forth by ideology; others will find themselves trapped in a real-life Ouroboros⁶²⁹ comprised of seven billion individuals meandering through a pointless world where the body always outlasts the frontiers of the mind and imagination, and for those not able to see themselves in the two previous examples, a Mandelbrot fractal⁶³⁰ will be their mirror, forever bound as slaves to the answers found within the equations of physics and mathematics.

Is this really the path we should condemn ourselves to? A never-ending world of illusion where all of our most cherished ideas, truths and beliefs are eventually absorbed into themselves to be regenerated over and over again, with no distance marked on this long journey of human existence, leading one and all to the conclusion that life is pointless?

Or we can embrace an idea like primary democracy, and say the problem is that we have, as yet, not allowed any suitable answers to be found or explored.

The journey of discovery is just beginning.

⁶²⁸ Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minnesota. 1984. p. 65.

⁶²⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ouroboros>

⁶³⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fractal>